the weekly
Standard

JANUARY 31, 2005

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AIDS IN AFRICA: A BETRAYAL
EDWARD C. GREEN

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Bush's second term

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'A Rigorous Scholar Who Cannot Defend Himself'

That's how blogger Andrew Sullivan has now described the late Clarence Arthur Tripp in the course of a long, serial complaint against THE WEEKLY STANDARD's recent "hatchet-job" review of Tripp's posthumous book, *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* ("Honest, Abe?" by Philip Nobile, January 17). Our reviewer thought the book—an attempt to establish that America's 16th president was gay—a "hoax and a fraud." But Sullivan rejects that charge as a piece of "character assassination" against a highly regarded "Kinseyite social scientist" with a "Ph.D. in clinical psychology" and a "superb and invaluable" collection of documentary evidence. For this (and for what he contends was our reviewer's failure to disclose a professional conflict of interest) "they need to apologize," Mr. Sullivan insists. "Will THE STANDARD correct?"

Because Philip Nobile's STANDARD essay about Dr. Tripp did, in fact, quite clearly and at great length discuss his personal interest in Tripp's work—and because Andrew Sullivan's demand for an apology otherwise fails to allege even a single substantive error in the piece—THE SCRAPBOOK hasn't yet been able to find anybody here at the magazine who understands what it is precisely we're supposed to correct.

THE SCRAPBOOK can report, however, that everybody here at THE STANDARD now seems fully inclined to endorse Mr. Sullivan's judgment that C.A. Tripp "cannot defend himself." And not just because Tripp is dead. Instead, we're inclined to think Tripp defenseless because it's come to our attention that most other "Kinseyite social scientists" gave up defending the man as far back as 1998, when he was still very much alive and active. It was then that Tripp made a star-turn appearance in a British television documentary about the great Alfred Kinsey's reliance, for "scientific data" concerning pre-adolescent sexuality, on men like Rex King. Beginning in 1943, King gave Kinsey access to the diary in which he'd kept detailed records of sexual assaults he'd committed against roughly 800 minor children, both boys and girls, some as young as five months old. Kinsey, to his eternal disgrace, thought the world of King.

And so, it devolves, did Kinsey's staff photographer, C.A. Tripp, who fondly reminisced about this "super-scientific" pedophile—among other things—in May 1998:

> The children all thought he was wonderful, all the mothers thought he was wonderful. There was no force, no harm, no pain . . . [just] two instances in which a young boy or girl—agreed to the sexual contact but then they found it very painful and yelled out when it actually took place. This was because they were very young and . . . there was a fit problem. But even there, there was no—never enough complaint to get him into any trouble.

At this point in his interview, Tripp momentarily digressed to make a "very important observation" about what happens "if you go out and masturbate dogs—I was very good at this when I was a boy." But then he returned to the subject of King, pronouncing him "totally" ethical, "clean as a whistle." The man "had sex with all the relatives and brothers and sisters and aunts," Tripp explained, "but nobody is objecting. He makes it pleasant. . . . And very few pedophiles make any damage anyway, it almost never happens."

No point beating around the bush, here: Clarence Arthur Tripp was not a "social scientist." He was a lunatic.

Will Andrew Sullivan correct? ♦

Will the *Today Show* Correct?

Thus did NBC's Katie Couric & Co. prepare to discuss The Great Emancipator's sleeping arrangements on Tuesday morning, January 11:

> COURIC: I'm Katie Couric, here with Lester Holt, Ann Curry, and Al Roker. . . .
>
> CURRY: Also ahead, a controversial new book is out today that may be trying to rewrite American history. In it, sex researcher C.A. Tripp—it claims that President Clinton may have been gay.
>
> COURIC: No, no, no. *Lincoln.*
>
> ROKER: *Lincoln.*
>
> CURRY: Lincoln, President Lincoln. [Laughter.]
>
> ROKER: Wow!
>
> CURRY: Never have a woman come back from—I am so jet lagged.
>
> ROKER: Wow!
>
> CURRY: President *Lincoln* may have been gay.
>
> COURIC: Hillary's on the phone for you.
>
> CURRY: I know. So sorry, Mr. Clinton. I'm *so* sorry, Mr. President.

Yeah, but *why* is Ann Curry sorry, THE SCRAPBOOK can't help wondering? What's so bad about calling someone gay? ♦

Will Prof. Nancy Hopkins Correct?

On-campus faculty pressure and intense, largely hostile media coverage have already—at this writing—forced Harvard president Lawrence H. Summers to issue three separate public apologies for remarks

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he made January 14 at a conference on the status of women in university math and science departments. Which is all by itself rather remarkable, given that almost nobody who's been criticizing him can possibly be sure exactly what he said. No text or tape of Summers's short, informal presentation to the National Bureau of Economic Research has yet been released. And none seems forthcoming; the meeting was meant to be entirely private and off the record, after all.

But that didn't stop one of the attendees from storming out of Summers's talk and promptly emailing her objections to a reporter for the *Boston Globe*. Best we can tell, from the *Globe* account and subsequent news stories, President Summers's great crime was to have speculated aloud about the possibility that discriminatory sexism might not explain 100 percent of the gender gap in tenure-track faculty positions at elite math and science programs around the country. The 80-hour work weeks typically required by leading academic science laboratories might have something to do with it; married women with children might find such a schedule intolerable. Or it might simply be that laboratory science—rather like, say, auto mechanics—doesn't hold quite the same appeal for women as it does for men.

There is by now, of course, a veritable mountain of modern social science evidence that gender differences in American employment and career trajectories are indeed influenced (if not primarily determined) by just those factors Larry Summers was here (allegedly) adducing. But that's evidently not the point. The point instead seems to be that the president of America's most prestigious university must never allow himself to mention such things out loud.

Otherwise, see, some whistleblower is likely to tell the *Boston Globe* that Larry Summers thinks women are too dumb to teach Ivy League physics. And a good part of the rest of the American academic universe is likely then to work itself into a lather of transparently insincere indignation about this patently ludicrous charge. (President Summers's purported expression of anti-distaff prejudice seriously threatens to "impede our current efforts to recruit top women scholars," according to the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences' Standing Committee on Women—which can't possibly believe that's true.)

Interestingly enough, by the way, the whistleblower in question turns out to have been one Nancy Hopkins, an MIT biology professor, who's since told reporters that the moment Summers started talking at the January 14 meeting, "I felt I was going to be sick. My heart was pounding and my breath was shallow." No, really: "I just couldn't breathe because this kind of bias makes me physically ill." And if she hadn't left the room immediately, "I would've either blacked out or thrown up."

THE SCRAPBOOK eagerly awaits an apology from Prof. Hopkins herself—for thus suggesting that tenured women at elite American universities are prone to Freudian hysteria-swoons whenever they're confronted with a discomfiting idea. ♦

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Casual

VOICEOVER

Hillary leans in to her husband, teeth clenched in a polite smile: "Bill! I swear, you are so predictable. Stop ogling that woman in the black beret! It's Karl's wife, for heaven's sake."

The Inaugural Luncheon is underway in the Capitol's Statuary Hall, and the table assignments are offering a world-class opportunity for my favorite pastime, which is to make up dialogue for people I can see but not hear. Fifty of the highest-ranking government officials are assembled with 200 of their nearest and dearest for a post-speech nosh. The press has been offered access to the Statuary Hall balcony, overlooking the festivities. Which is where I sit, munching on a PB&J sandwich I brought with me, imagining the conversation below.

Table 7 looks promising. Seated around an elaborate but low-lying centerpiece are Bill and Hillary Clinton; Senator Edward Kennedy and the missus; and Karl Rove and his lovely wife—who is sporting a rhinestone-studded black beret.

They say one isn't supposed to talk politics, religion, or sex at the dinner table. But two prayers have been said, and, with Bill Clinton on hand and this being Washington, I can't see how they could possibly avoid the other two subjects. Then again, it's lunch, so maybe that rule doesn't apply.

Bill is in his element, chatting up everyone, then sharing a long powwow with The Architect himself. Rove pats Clinton on the back, smiling in a way that makes the rest of his soft, fleshy face ball up around his small, round nose. But the idea of friendly chatter between the pair is so mind-boggling that even my fevered imagination fails to script an appropriate dialogue.

Mrs. Rove elbows Karl and raises her eyebrows as a woman in knee-high boots and a brown Chanel-like suit leans in for a cheek kiss with House Speaker Denny Hastert. As she lays one on him, her knee bends and her foot kicks up behind her—a move usually reserved for end-of-date doorstep makeout sessions. Perhaps she is whispering

in his ear: "Denny, I'm your biggest fan."

Another Table 7 denizen, Justice Stephen Breyer, glancing over at his colleague Antonin Scalia at Table 22, whispers into his wife's ear. I imagine him saying, "I wonder how Nino is getting along with Mary Cheney's girlfriend."

Indeed, Table 22, on the far side of the room, looks to be fertile ground for my little game. Mary Cheney is chatting up Colin and Alma Powell, while her partner Heather Poe seems to be making small talk with the Scalias. After initial pleasantries, I imagine the latter trio quickly reduced to discussing the menu, which—I happen to know because I have a copy—offers extensive historical background on the meal.

"Oh," says Heather, "I see we're having Roasted Quail with Brined Root Vegetables and Apple Wild Cherry Compote for dessert, in honor of the fact that 200 years ago, 'Lewis and Clark foraged the land for a bountiful harvest of fruits and berries.' How novel." The Scalias nod, unsure what to say next. Mrs. Scalia hazards a response: "Ah yes, and for the first course we'll have Scalloped Crab and Lobster, which was served at Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural ball exactly 100 years ago."

Awkward silence returns. Heather gives it another try: "Mary says you sometimes go duck hunting with her dad. Do you ever shoot quail?"

Also at Table 22 are Governor Jeb Bush and his wife, Columba; and Senator Mitch McConnell and his wife, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. The two couples seem happy to sit quietly. Perhaps they are eavesdroppers and inventors of conversations like me.

At the end of the festivities, guests are presented with a souvenir—a cobalt bowl decorated with pewter thingamajigs and a commemorative inscription. No bowl is left behind, as the guests all schlep their bulky gift bags away, though at home their trophy shelves must already be crammed full of history swag. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld pauses to exchange a few words with Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, both dutifully carrying their bags. Perhaps Rumsfeld is grumbling: "Another damn commemorative bowl, eh? I guess we can't just leave the darn things here, can we Harry?"

Former President Clinton is the last to leave—even Hillary has long since vacated when he finally departs—and he's midway through thanking individual Capitol Police officers for their service at the luncheon when someone calls out the question I've been dying to ask. He smiles and replies: "What did Karl Rove and I talk about?" A pause. "We talked about presidential libraries."

KATHERINE MANGU-WARD

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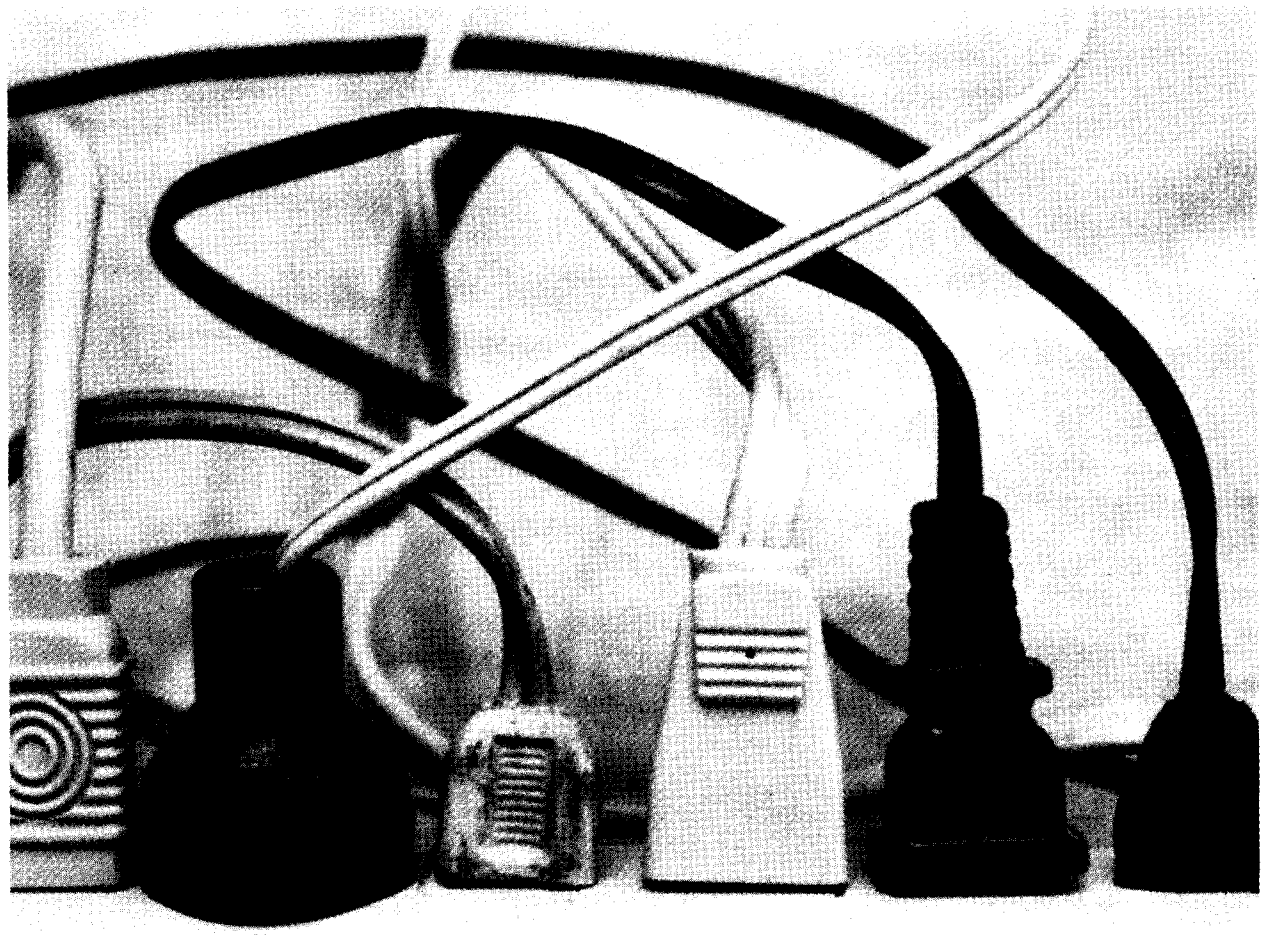

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Pension Panic

Irwin M. Stelzer cautions perceptively against "solutions" to "problems" that are unduly magnified. But Stelzer's most important point is reserved for last: Medicare is a much more serious and increasing problem than Social Security.

But why are we discussing individual investment accounts, with their overwhelming administrative costs? Why not simply invest some fraction of the payroll taxes received in mutual funds, or in a mutual fund established and managed by a government agency or by the Federal Reserve Bank?

The mutual fund could be a mix of bonds and equities, with the mix adjusted to maintain a good compromise between risk and potential return. Or we could have several funds, each administered by a different agency, so as to encourage competition for performance.

R. Murray Campbell
Cohasset, MA

How can we have an informed debate on Social Security when Irwin M. Stelzer asks us to "assume that there is such a thing" as a Social Security Trust Fund ("Social Security Snares & Delusions," Jan. 17)? There is no such animal—a fact necessary to understanding the length of time we have before Social Security becomes insolvent.

We all know how it works: FICA taxes come into the government, which uses the funds to pay current Social Security obligations, and then uses what is left over to pay for tanks, crop subsidies, and the like. The government then writes out an IOU for the surplus it spent and puts it into the "Trust Fund."

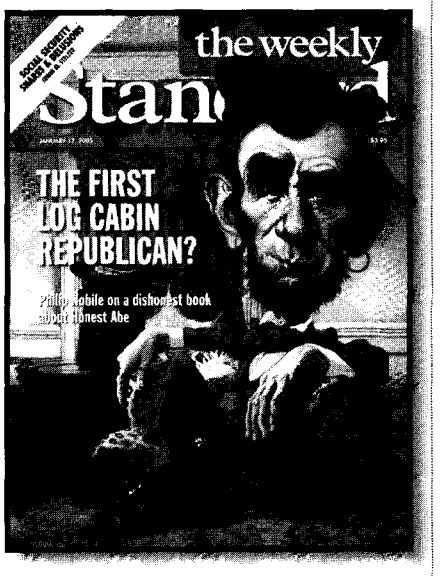
But in no real financial, logical, or moral sense is an IOU written to oneself an asset, the type of thing found in genuine trust funds. That the government pretends to pay interest on these self-IOUs just adds insult to injury.

The date of insolvency, an important milestone in a debate on how the system should be reformed, is the date at which current Social Security obligations are not covered by FICA receipts. That date will come in 2018, not in 2028 or 2042 as Stelzer and others would have us believe.

The clock is ticking. It would be a great public service if The Weekly Standard barred from its pages any mention or discussion of the nonexistent Social Security Trust Fund.

John Gay
Arlington, VA

In his comments on Social Security, Irwin M. Stelzer is misled, as are many, by government accounting when he says the system may not be on the brink of insolvency. He actually believes that the "Trust Fund" will have "earnings" that will cover outlays until



2028, or that benefits may be paid until 2042 and "possibly later."

But the supposed "Trust Fund" is actually a loan of trillions of dollars to Congress—which is spending $1.50 for every $1 of its own income, and is forecasting its own on-budget deficits of $3 trillion over the next 6 years.

Similarly, the "interest income" is just an accounting entry by which Congress tells the Social Security Administration to "put it on the tab," because it has no way to pay any principal back, let alone any interest. Even worse yet, "actuarial balance," which is supposed to measure solutions, is premised on there being a Trust Fund, which there of course isn't.

It is all an enormous accounting myth that, quite unfortunately, is confusing everyone's thinking about a crucial subject and leading us toward bad decision-making.

Bert McLachlan
Katy, TX

Irwin M. Stelzer responds: Of course the "Trust Fund" is not what its name implies. In my article I clearly stated that I would not go into that issue, since it has little to do with the current debate—unless anyone worries that the government will renege on the IOUs that constitute the "fund." The issues are two: Is what Winston Churchill was wont to demand, "Action Now," required, and what action would modernize a system crafted when Americans died earlier and were poorer? To President Bush's credit, he is tackling what he sees as a problem even though action now is not needed—a brave step by a conviction politician. But for reasons I state in my article, a pause for reflection, to consider the issues I raise and Rep. Bill Thomas has since repeated, might improve the president's proposals.

A Tale of Two Wars

The gist of Frederick W. Kagan's "Fighting the Wrong War" (Jan. 17) is that we need a bigger Army in Iraq to guard ammunition dumps, police the border, allow for better troop rotation, and so on. These are valid points, but Kagan misses the essential one: We are not fighting the "wrong" war; we are fighting a "different" war.

Let's divide the Iraq war into Phase I and Phase II. In Phase I, it was U.S. conventional forces versus Iraqi conventional forces—and we won in 21 days. In Phase II, it is uniformed U.S. troops versus non-uniformed Iraqi insurgents, many of whom are jihadists. While we may not want to fight this war, we had better learn how.

Indeed, it's a war we are fighting worldwide along with many other nations. The nation that seems to be most successful in combating non-uniformed insurgents is Israel. What have the Israelis done? They fight insurgents with barriers, roadblocks, inspection

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points, intelligence, and precision strikes.

These techniques, not a larger Army of Phase I troops, is what we need in Iraq.

BILL THAYER
San Diego, CA

O'CONNOR'S CATHOLICISM

I AM EVER SO GRATEFUL for Maria Andraca Carano's thorough and sympathetic review of my *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* ("Southern Cross," Jan. 3 / Jan. 10), especially for her getting most of my argument right. I hardly have cause to complain. But on one crucial point, Carano has misread my intentions. She seems to fear that I have hijacked O'Connor for the Protestant cause, turning her into a crypto-Baptist, when St. Flannery clearly belongs to Rome alone. I seek, in fact, to make exactly the opposite case: O'Connor has such a scandalously faithful Catholic imagination that, far from claiming her as one of ours, I urge evangelical Christians to be claimed by her kind of faith.

In my treatment of baptism, for example, I stress O'Connor's deeply Catholic conviction over the historic Baptist position. I argue repeatedly that baptism is the efficacious sacrament of initiation into the Christian life, and therefore a radical act that transfers our allegiance from the kingdoms of this world to the Kingdom of God. It is not our autonomous pledge simply to follow Jesus but rather the church's utterly gracious gift of the freedom that enables our lifelong conversion.

Nor can one imagine the mystics whom O'Connor admired to be, as Carano suggests, altogether serene souls (and thus utterly unlike O'Connor's fierce fundamentalist saints). When Hazel Motes puts glass shards in his shoes and binds his chest with barbed wire, he is not far removed from Catherine of Siena throwing herself into the fire and Francis of Assisi stripping naked to die on the cold Umbrian ground. In all such matters, I have sought not to "steal" O'Connor from Roman Catholics, but to show Protestants how much we have to learn from her, and so to help Catholics honor one of their own.

RALPH C. WOOD
Waco, TX

FIGHTIN' WORDS

MATTHEW CONTINETTI'S report on the Hamilton/Burr duel ("The 200-Year Duel," Dec. 13) was excellent, but there's one more thing worth mentioning: Gore Vidal's speculation about the "despicable opinion" expressed by Alexander Hamilton that may well have led to the duel.

In his 1973 historical novel *Burr* (which is very pro-Burr—Vidal claims to be related), Vidal offers the following: Burr had a very attractive daughter who became his constant traveling companion after his wife's death. In the final pages of *Burr*, someone says, "Didn't you know? Hamilton said that Burr had been his daughter's lover."

Hamilton certainly could have said it. And it might have even been true. We'll never know.

BILL TUCKER
Brooklyn, NY

MILE-HIGH SCROOGE

IN "MERRY CHRISTMAS" (Dec. 27), Joseph Bottum didn't mention Denver mayor John Hickenlooper, who floated the idea of changing the "Merry Christmas" sign on the City and County Building to read "Happy Holidays."

Hickenlooper was quickly dubbed "HickenScrooge," and about one second after that, he recanted.

TRISH MELROSE
Louisville, CO

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, fourth week in August, and the second week in November) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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the weekly Standard

On Tyranny

A social science that cannot speak of tyranny with the same confidence with which medicine speaks, for example, of cancer, cannot understand social phenomena as what they are.

—Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered. Yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph.

—Thomas Paine, *The Crisis*

Informed by Strauss and inspired by Paine, appealing to Lincoln and alluding to Truman, beginning with the Constitution and ending with the Declaration, with Biblical phrases echoing throughout—George W. Bush's second inaugural was a powerful and subtle speech.

It will also prove to be a historic speech. Less than three and a half years after 9/11, Bush's Second Inaugural moves American foreign policy beyond the war on terror to the larger struggle against tyranny. It grounds Bush's foreign policy—American foreign policy—in American history and American principles. If actions follow words and success greets his efforts, then President Bush will have ushered in a new era in American foreign policy.

That era will of course build on the efforts and achievements of his predecessors—especially Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan. The invocation of Truman is clear. Here is Truman, in his address to a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, announcing what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine: "I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." And here is Bush: "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

Truman's basically defensive formulation of the doctrine of containment was appropriate at the beginning of the Cold War. Reagan was able, two decades later, to go further and to talk of transcending or overcoming communism. So we did, and Bush claims we are in a new and more hopeful era: "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are *now* one." Our previous victories allow a more expansive embrace of America's "ultimate goal."

Expansive does not mean reckless. Bush avoids John Kennedy's impressive but overly grand, "pay any price, bear any burden" formulation. Bush states that military force will of course be used to "protect this nation and its people against further attacks and emerging threats," and that "we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary." But he explains that the task of ending tyranny around the world is not "primarily the task of arms." The goal of ending tyranny will be pursued through many avenues, and is the "work of generations."

And Bush makes careful distinctions among the nations of the world. There are democratic allies, to whom he reaches out for help. There are "governments with long habits of control"—in Russia, or China, or the Arab dictatorships—whose leaders Bush urges to start on the "journey of progress and justice, and America will walk at your side." But he also makes clear to these leaders that we will pressure them and hold them accountable for oppression, and that we will support dissidents and democratic reformers in their countries.

Then there are the "outlaw regimes." It is their rulers who call to mind Lincoln's statement: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it." So for those nations we intend to promote regime change—primarily through peaceful means, but not ruling out military force in the case of threats to us.

If the critics of the speech who have denounced it as simple-minded were to read it, they would find it sophisticated. They might even find it nuanced.

Still, sophisticated and nuanced as it is, it does proclaim the goal of ending tyranny. And just as Truman's speech shaped policy, so Bush's will. As he implicitly acknowledges, his presidency will be judged not by this speech but by his achievements. The speech, by laying out a clear and compelling path for U.S. foreign policy, will make substantial achievements easier. There will be vigorous debates over how to secure these achievements—debates over defense spending and diplomacy, over particular tactics and operational choices. We will at times differ with the president on some of these matters, as we have at times in the past. But on the fundamental American goal, President Bush has it right—profoundly right.

—*William Kristol*

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Double or Nothing

Bush's high-stakes second term.

BY FRED BARNES

PRESIDENT BUSH could have opted for an easy route to modest success in the White House. After overthrowing the Taliban and routing al Qaeda in Afghanistan, he could have stopped there and not ordered an invasion of Iraq. In his first inaugural address, he advocated "a balance of power that favors freedom." Even after 9/11, he could have continued with such modest rhetoric and ambitions. He did not have to embrace a worldwide crusade for democracy in his second inaugural.

He won congressional approval of three tax cuts in his first term. He could have rejected the idea of major tax reform as a second-term goal. Bush promoted Social Security reform in his 2000 and 2004 campaigns. He could have settled for small individual investment accounts, using payroll taxes, and passed the task of restraining the growth of benefits to his successors. Had he taken the easy route, he'd have won reelection in a breeze and he'd be wildly popular today.

President Bush has chosen the hard route. The lessons he seems to have learned from his first term are: set the bar very high, don't do things halfway, forget opinion polls, use every bit of political capital and personal influence you have to achieve your goals, never play small ball, and be ready to take chances. So, instead of relaxing and savoring the achievements of his first term, Bush has laid out a formidable agenda for the next four years: the democratization of Iraq, the spread of freedom around the world, the passage of sweeping tax reform, and making Social Security solvent and sustainable for the rest of this century. For Bush, this could lead to spectacular success. Or, if things don't work out, he could end up relegated to the bitter ranks of failed presidents.

Why is Bush doing this? One explanation is he hates to fool around with small measures. They bore him. Another explanation, offered half-seriously by a White House aide, is that he's a Texan. For Texans, the aide says, the bigger the project, the better. In addition, the president regards himself as a problem-solver. "If there is a problem . . . I have responsibility to lay out potential solutions," he told the *Wall Street Journal*. When you combine an inclination to take on problems with a penchant for grand proposals, "you get George W. Bush," the aide says.

Oddly, the president's conservatism is not a brake on his desire to change institutions and countries. While he is philosophically conservative, he is anything but temperamentally conservative. Peter Wehner, a deputy to Bush political adviser Karl Rove, noted in a recent speech that "a conservative temperament can be counterproductive." At times, "the role of conservatism has been to be reactive," Wehner said. "At other times, the role of conservatism is to be proactive, bold, energetic, and optimistic—to shape history rather than impede it. We live in a history-shaping moment." Bush wants to do the shaping.

It's amazing how much the president has expanded his agenda from his initial days in office. His 2001 inaugural address took 14 minutes. His speech last week was 21 minutes long. In 2001, Bush said, "America remains engaged in the world by history and by choice, shaping a balance of power that favors freedom." In 2005, he upped the ante dramatically. "America, in this young century, proclaims liberty throughout all the world, and to all the inhabitants thereof," he declared at the end of his second inaugural speech. "Renewed in our strength—tested, but not weary—we are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom."

On taxes, Bush's take in 2001 reflected a faith in conventional conservatism. "We will reduce taxes," he said, "to recover the momentum of our economy and reward the effort and enterprise of working Americans." But in his speech last September at the Republican convention, he outlined a new and bigger tax agenda. The tax code, he said, was "created for the world of yesterday, not tomorrow." It's a "complicated mess, filled with special interest loopholes, saddling our people with more than six billion hours of paperwork and headache every year," Bush said. "The American people deserve—and our economic future demands—a simpler, fairer, pro-growth system. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the federal tax code."

Again in 2001, the president said he would "reform Social Security and Medicare, sparing our children from struggles we have the power to prevent." That was the extent of his comments on Social Security. At the 2004 convention, he brought up two specific issues on Social Security, one expected, the other new. Bush's support for individual accounts ("a nest egg you can call your own") was expected. His mention of the sustainability of Social Security wasn't. "Many of our children and grandchildren understandably worry whether Social Security will be there when they need it," he said. Now Bush has decided personal accounts

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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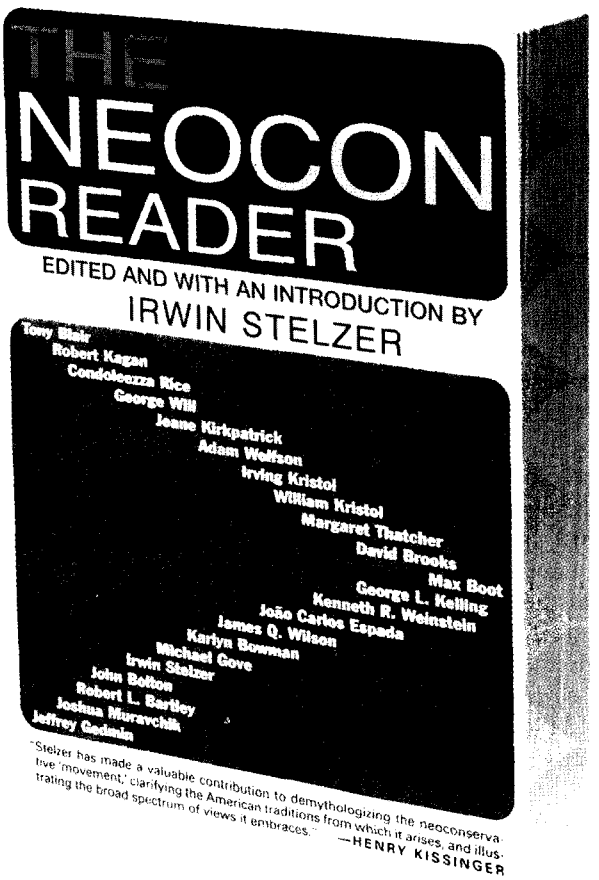

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aren't enough. The solvency of Social Security must be guaranteed for decades to come. That is a far bigger task.

In Bush's case, major policy issues can be divided into ones he's obliged to deal with and those that are optional. Given his campaign promises in 2000, he was required to work for education reform, which resulted in No Child Left Behind. And he was obliged to cut taxes and produce a Medicare prescription drug benefit for seniors. Since he talked up the faith-based approach to social problems, he needed to pursue that idea as well, and he has with partial success. After the 9/11 attacks, the war in Afghanistan became a necessity in the war on terrorism.

But it's the optional issues—Iraq, democracy, tax reform, Social Security solvency—that will define the Bush presidency. Bush could have ignored these issues with political impunity. He chose not to. They are not issues on which events dictate the solution. They are ones where Bush wants to shape the solution. Rather than a caretaker president like his father, he's become a risk-taker, a conservative with the disposition of a radical. And a rather unusual president. ♦

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Freewheeling Protesters

Critical Mass comes to the inauguration.

BY MATT LABASH

YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT to our political players. Even with the onset of second-term ho-hums, everyone did his part to convey the momentousness of what some wags call the "peaceful non-transfer of power." Republicans turned out for the inauguration in cashmere-swaddled, mink-stoled finery, dutifully forcing smiles as the president they returned to office cast doubt on their good judgment by showcasing a Lawrence-Welk singer crooning the John Ashcroft-penned "Let the Eagle Soar."

Then there were those pesky protesters. During every convention or inauguration or political-pageant-of-the-day, they go at it once more, as though anyone besides their group-housemates cares. It's as if each side sits down for a quadrennial poker game, the protesters saying to the establishment parties, "I'll see your hollow ceremony, and raise you a gesture of futility."

There's a rote, *Groundhog Day* quality to it all. It can leave you itching for something more: "the untamed fire of freedom," in the words of our president. And to a bourgeois reporter in a buttoned-down town, there is no greater symbol of freedom than the bike messenger. What respectable citizen among us hasn't wanted to know the feeling of weaving around cars, barreling down sidewalks, wearing fingerless gloves, and shooting heroin in the park?

Happily, the inaugural protests provided a way to combine my aspirations with my obligations. I signed up with the Critical Mass bike protest team. Originating in San Francisco in the early '90s, they are a loose confederation of cyclists who commandeer city streets and generally wreak havoc with traffic. Critical Mass's founding fathers conceived this action as an environmental rebuke to the automobile. But it's become another all-purpose wrench in the grievance-group toolbox. As Nani Wepaste, my Critical-Mass rabbi, puts it, "People are so individualistic these days. Critical Mass is whatever you want it to be."

A few days before the inauguration, I meet Wepaste during Media Day at the protesters' convergence center, a decrepit warehouse where demonstrations are plotted by everyone from the anarchists to the Radical Cheerleaders to the Keys of Resistance (a group that dresses like 1940s-era secretaries and bangs out dictated letters of dissent to elected officials on antique typewriters). While protesters invariably bemoan the nefarious influence of corporate media, they tend to be media whores themselves, going so far as to throw media open houses, complete with refreshments.

The fiftysomething Wepaste looks the part of the revolutionary, with her Che beret and hemp messenger bag. But in reality, Wepaste (real name: Nancy Shia) is a lapsed Republican who spends her days poring over government-hearing transcripts for the Federal News Service. Such a gig affords her occasional proximity to the president, whom she dislikes for hijacking what was once her party, the party of Lincoln and Eisenhower, the latter of whom warned against the ascent of the military-industrial com-

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Nani Wepaste and her Critical Mass cohorts

plex. As a photographer, she takes full advantage of her proximity, incorporating Bush photos into her protest artwork.

As we stand in the convergence center's art space, she shows me some. "Look at this one," she says, pointing to a photo of Bush blinking with one eye at half-mast, the eyelid fluttering over a rolling pupil. "He looks like he's high on crack; took it at the National Press Club," she boasts.

Before our ride, I tell her I think we need a team name. I try out the Unicorns, the very symbol of priapic virility, which she doesn't like, then the Fuzzbusters, which she thinks is "too confrontational." She doesn't want to get arrested, as many of her cohorts did two years ago, when D.C. police, in a rare display of cunning, provided bike-protesters an escort, then herded many of them into a park, arresting several. "Let's stick with Critical Mass," she says. She's the boss. But since she had said the group was whatever I wanted it to be, I stick with the Unicorns.

So at dawn on Inauguration Day, two dozen or so Unicorns mount up at Union Station. "Let's roll," someone says, Todd Beamer-esquely. I am comfortable on my steed, having dragged my own Trek Navigator hybrid mountain bike in from the suburbs. But when we reach the first intersection, I make the foolish mistake of stopping at a red light, and am nearly plowed through by another rider. "Why'd you stop?" she says. "We're not supposed to?" I ask, so innocent. Another Unicorn yells, with Zen-master calm, "You don't stop. It's an uninterrupted flow of bodies, beautiful, unfolding, and natural."

We make a pass at an armed services recruiting station, where Wepaste chants a spirited "Hell no / We won't go / We won't fight for Texaco." But it falls on deaf ears. Or no ears, more accurately. It's too early, and the recruiting station is closed. So we roll on through the badlands of northeast D.C. We're not in the saddle 10 minutes before Wepaste bellows out another war cry: "Hot chocolate on New York Avenue!" The Unicorns look like a marauding band of bike messengers, but it's not packages we're delivering, it's a list of demands. Foremost among them: *What do we want? Hot cocoa! When do we want it? Now!*

Sated from the Swiss Miss with marshmallows, we call the morning-ride quits after stopping at a Malcolm X Park protest featuring flag-draped coffins and the D.C. Labor Chorus, as pleasing to the ear as their name suggests. I meet Sketch, who's part of our crew, and whom I mistake for an anarchist, since he wears a bandanna over his face. But he's not one. He simply attends a lot of these rides and wants to maintain anonymity and not risk overexposure. He doesn't want to be known as the Lindsay Lohan of the protest movement. I offer to take Sketch and Wepaste to Starbucks, but Sketch will only drink "fair-trade coffee," preferably shade-grown, though he's not quite sure what it means. We go to Caribou instead—the trendy chain of coffee houses unfairly rumored to have terror links (First Islamic Bank of Bahrain is its majority owner).

I point out to Nani that we seem mainly to be hitting friendly spots. "Don't worry," she says. "We'll get to you guys." (Indeed, one of the protesters cheerily tells me they've scheduled a future action targeting my neocon war-mongering colleagues at THE WEEKLY STANDARD. She even offers a sneak-preview of the chant: "Hey Bill Kristol you can't hide / We charge you with genocide.")

We go our separate ways for a few hours, then meet up again for an afternoon ride, this time, down to the inaugural parade route. Wepaste is still nominally in charge—though nobody's ever really in charge of Critical Mass. I've spent the afternoon reading CM theory on the Internet, so when fellow Unicorn Jack throws up his hand to halt traffic, I'm wowed. "Awesome corking, Jack. Really textbook," I say. "What's that?" he asks. I explain it's the official term for intersection-blocking maneuvers. He nods appreciatively, explaining how he puts a little sugar on top by shooting a thumbs-up to motorists afterwards. "You're like a goodwill ambassador," I suggest. "We're all ambassadors," he says, modestly.

Everything's not sweetness and light, however. As we swerve around cars and ride median strips, some cops don't seem to appreciate it. I'm a law-and-order guy ordinarily, but after suffering too many automated-camera tickets at the hands of the glorified meter-maids that staff the D.C. police, I have only one thing to say to them:

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Let's dance, bulls. An SUV pulls up behind me, and starts blipping his siren, causing me to cry out, "I've got a Smokey on my tail." But as we lose him in a gridlock slalom, nobody raises an eyebrow—perhaps they just don't understand the '70s CB radio argot I picked up from too many *BJ and the Bear* episodes.

Ride with the CM'ers long enough, and you'll inevitably get a chance to lead, since they tend to be guided only by instinct, like a herd of feral cats. My shot came toward the end of the parade route. Hanging a Louie onto 18th Street, heading down a hill toward Pennsylvania Avenue, I yell to Wepaste that there's no cops blocking the tributary feeding into the parade route. "Matt's leading us!" she yells, providing my proudest moment as a Unicorn.

But as I let off the brake and aim my bike full-tilt in the direction of some oblivious drum majors, I feel suddenly abandoned. I swivel my head, and see my teammates holding back, circling warily. "What's wrong?" I scream. "We made it—we're in!" Wepaste shakes her head as slow-to-react mounted police close the gap, and start pushing us back. "It's a trap," she says, ever the seasoned veteran.

We take off for the end of the parade route, passing a parked Texaco float, which fires everyone up again (oil is bad). A high school marching band from West Monroe, La., is so close we could touch the marchers, but instead of throwing things or hurling invectives, some CM'ers, who've now stopped their bikes, take their cameras out, and start clicking photos. Earlier, Wepaste had reprimanded me when I asked their term for the scrambling maneuver we'd executed: "You look for too much order," she says, "You have to live with the chaos. Enjoy it."

But perhaps there is something to be said for formality, ceremony, squareness. For one thing is clear as I watch my fellow Unicorns grow tame and saucer-eyed the closer they get to the inaugural spectacle: Everyone loves a parade. ♦

Sometimes a Great Speech

A close reading of the second Bush inaugural.

BY DAVID GELERNTER

GEORGE W. BUSH is a strong, clear-minded president—one of the strongest and clearest-minded we have ever had. Why can't a great president give a great speech?

The president's second inaugural address was fine and generous, a big speech with sweeping views in all directions, a speech Americans can be proud of. But the language did not always rise to the level of the ideas. There were many good phrases, a few superb ones, and a brilliant ending. There were also weak phrases, a few unclear ones, and one absolute stinker. On the whole it was very good. It should have been better.

Granted: Poking holes is easy and fun. Turning blank pages into finished speeches for nagging critics to poke holes in is not so easy and no fun. Besides, any sane person will choose beautiful ideas over beautiful writing any day. But why can't this president have both? He deserves both.

But, before we begin, it's important to understand that loads of people work on big presidential speeches, some of them perfectly willing to override good prose in the interest of fine-tuning the political implications of every last syllable. The real writers, left alone, would unquestionably have produced better writing. In these comments I criticize the words, not the wordsmiths.

And one last caveat, in a way even more important. Inaugural addresses deserve to be pored over because they are monumentally important and will be reread for as long as the nation exists; possibly longer. But no other writers in the world have their prose so mercilessly dissected. Inaugural-address writing is not for the faint-hearted. A few years of fighter-pilot experience probably helps. (Ask the president.)

Let's begin with some good moves. The president and his writers have a gift for laying down a barrage of short, strong phrases that hit home with great force. The president was "determined to fulfill the oath that I have sworn and you have witnessed." Each short, energetic phrase makes the speech surge forward. I am *determined* to *fulfill*, I have *sworn*, you have *witnessed*; terrific. Or: "You have seen that life is fragile, and evil is real, and courage triumphs." New power kicks in at regular intervals. It's a three-stage rocket of a sentence.

But there are too many wrong or weak or confusing words, and phrases that are not quite right, and sentences that are not absolutely clear. Each time you hear one you wonder "*What?*" for a split second; then you forget all about it as the speech moves forward. But those split-second pauses produce a scratchy, unpolished texture that listeners experience as a vague not-quite-rightness.

"We have seen our vulnerability—and we have seen its deepest source." The first "seen" refers to real seeing—we turned on our TVs and saw towers on fire. (A rhythm Blake would have liked.) The second "seen" is confusing. Was there a TV picture of a "deep source"? What does one look like? The president should have said, "We have seen our vulnerability—and understood its deepest source."

He was seduced by parallelism,

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which is usually a good thing. But not always. The president said, "No one is fit to be a master and no one deserves to be a slave." Nice parallelism: *no one is fit* paired with *no one deserves*. Notice how much weaker the first phrase sounds than "No *man* is fit to be a master"; it was cut out by feminist censors (now internalized and conveniently posted in our brains). But the real problem is the second phrase: No one "deserves to be a slave." If Saddam *deserves* to be executed, surely he *deserves* to be enslaved, which is a less-awful punishment. Slavery is unacceptable not because no criminal is vicious enough to *deserve* it, but because it demeans our own sense of God's justice. "As I would not be a *slave*," said Lincoln, "so I would not be a *master*." Hint: If you can quote Lincoln, do.

Other words are not quite right and parallelism has nothing to do with it. Violence "will cross the most defended borders," said the president; he should have said "the *best* defended borders." Only one force can "expose the pretensions of tyrants, and reward the hopes of the decent and tolerant, and that is the force of human freedom." But the drive for freedom doesn't *expose* bad things, it *defeats* them. And why not "the *barbarity* of tyrants" instead of merely their "pretensions"? And why bestow a weak-tea phrase like "the decent and tolerant" (as if they were Miss Congeniality runners-up) on desperate peoples longing for liberty?

More wrong words; more milliseconds lost to confusion. "Every man and woman on this earth has rights and dignity and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of heaven and earth." "Matchless value" sounds like a late-night cable TV pitch (*Plus* we'll throw in a LintMasterII!). The president meant "immeasurable value," "infinite worth," something like that. "They bear the image of the Maker of heaven and earth," said the president. An echo of the Nicene Creed, okay, but "They were created in the image of God" would have been even better. Hint: If you can quote the King James Bible, do.

The president said, "My most solemn duty is to protect this nation." But "my most solemn duty" only *sounds* as if it means something; on closer inspection it doesn't. He might have meant "My most important duty," or "my hardest duty," or something else. We can't tell.

Sometimes we find words or phrases that are just too weak for this president. No "human being aspires to live

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at the mercy of bullies." Granted, but how can a president who has beaten the Taliban and Saddam speak of "bullies," as if they were vicious schoolboys? What ever happened to "bloody thuggish murderers," for example? Let a strong, clear-minded president use strong, clear words. "When freedom came under attack," said the president, "our response came like a single hand over a single heart." Why is it a "response" to a terrorist atrocity to put your hand on your heart? Affirming one's patriotism is always right, but our response went much farther than that. "When freedom came under attack, we struggled as one to rescue the victims and care for the wounded; we wept as one, mourned as one, then struck as one—not to wreak vengeance but to spread blessing." My sentence is neither brilliant nor memorable but *is* closer (I think) to what the president actually meant.

Sometimes the tone is wrong. "To serve your people you must learn to trust them." Sounds like a guidance counselor addressing the ninth grade.

"Because we have acted in the great liberating tradition of this nation" is a classic piece of unclear writing. Does a tradition become a "great *liberating* tradition" because it makes us feel free?—like sky-diving or running a marathon? Sure, *I know what he means*. In an inaugural address, that's not good enough. Likewise "we will make our society more prosperous and just and equal." Equal to *what*? To cut that kind of corner doesn't work on America's greatest occasion.

Another example; another split-second's wondering instead of listening: "One day this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest corners of our world." The "fire of freedom" is good, but *world* suggests *globe*, and globes have no corners. I don't imagine that many listeners smacked their foreheads in befuddlement. (What? Globes don't have corners!) What actually happens is more like a fast-moving shadow that disappears almost before you notice it. A trivial point; a crumpled gum-wrapper. But enough crumpled gum-wrappers can ruin a beautiful lawn. If the president had said, "this untamed fire of freedom will reach the darkest caves on earth," he would also have hinted at bin Laden's ultimate destruction.

There was one flat-out unacceptable moment. Evidently the "edifice of character" is "sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount," and . . . "the words of the Koran"? Come off it! *Which* words? Name one! Is there a single sentence, phrase, idea in the Koran that has made *any difference* to this nation *whatsoever*? I'm not knocking the Koran; pluralism is wonderful. The problem is that at this moment, no listener in the whole world could possibly have believed that the president was serious.

To close with the Liberty Bell was brilliant—exactly right. The goal of the address was to ring-out crisp and clear and bright and bell-like; to proclaim liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof. And the president finished with one of the best phrases in the whole speech: "We are ready for the greatest achievements in the history of freedom."

Let me conclude from a different angle. Good, clear writing is a dead-serious issue. A society that is unable to express itself clearly is endangering its very existence. But don't forget that Republicans have a lot on their minds nowadays—intellectual spring cleaning, a ton of old liberal myths to be dumped in the garbage, a fast-changing world to understand under new assumptions in new ways. Reactionaries have more time than radicals to polish their prose. Democrats have had plenty of time to work the bugs out of their speeches; they've been saying the same damned things, more or less, for 30 years. But I'd choose a George W. Bush pronouncement over an exquisitely polished reactionary-liberal utterance any day. I'm proud of the president's speech and what it says about him, about Progressive Conservatism, and about America.

Not such a bad performance after all. ♦

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Saddam's Man in Washington

The first conviction in the U.N. Oil-for-Food scandal. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

SAMIR VINCENT was visiting Baghdad when Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. He had not lived in his native Iraq for some three decades, having left in 1958 for the United States and a track-and-field career that would later land him in the Boston College Athletic Hall of Fame. Maybe Vincent's presence in Iraq was simply bad timing.

Although Americans were not exactly hostages in the tense days after the invasion, they were not free to leave Iraq. So when Vincent, a naturalized citizen, and Illinois businessman Michael Saba managed to escape by taking a taxicab eight hours to the Jordanian border and hitchhiking the remaining 50 miles to Amman, their adventure was news.

Washingtonians who read Keith Kendrick's *Washington Post* article about the trip, published August 15, 1990, probably gave it little thought. In hindsight, however, the story seems to offer the first clues to the events that culminated last week in Vincent's admission that he had accepted millions of dollars to work as an agent for Saddam in the United States.

In that *Post* interview nearly 15 years ago, Vincent downplayed any drama and insisted his journey had been "quite uneventful." Vincent said he believed that even if he were caught fleeing the country "the most the Iraqi authorities could do was to turn us back at the border." And, according to the *Post*, Vincent "refused to discuss details such as his age or his family" and "said he was reluctant to go into depth about his ordeal because he was 'very tired' by what had happened."

All of that might be true. It is also possible that Vincent simply wanted to keep a low profile because he was already working for the Iraqi regime.

Vincent is the first person to be charged in connection with the burgeoning U.N. Oil-for-Food scandal. According to information filed by the U.S. government in the Southern District of New York, Vincent "consulted with and repeatedly received direction from the Government of Iraq in the course of lobbying officials of the United States Government and the United Nations to repeal sanctions against Iraq." Last week he pleaded guilty to acting as an unregistered agent of a foreign government, making false statements on his income taxes, and related offenses.

Court documents tell us that Vincent began his activities on Saddam's behalf in "at least" 1992. (Other reports—including one detailed in *Fooling America*, written by former *Newsweek* reporter and leftist author Robert Parry—suggest that Vincent left Baghdad in early August 1990, right after the invasion of Kuwait, on a mission. Parry describes Vincent as a high-level intermediary, a messenger for Saddam. According to Parry's account, Vincent approached Col. Carl Bernard, USMC Ret., and former CIA director Richard Helms with an offer from Saddam Hussein. But the first Bush administration rejected these and all other overtures, insisting on an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.)

The charges against Vincent center on his efforts to shape U.N. Resolution 986, adopted on April 14, 1995, and the design for its implementation, finalized more than a year later. The measure created the U.N.-directed mechanism by which the Iraqis could sell oil to purchasers of their choice, with the proceeds to provide humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people. In February 1996, as negotiators sought to spell out the terms of Oil-for-Food, Vincent traveled to Baghdad. He "participated in the drafting of agreements with other Iraqi Government officials that guaranteed millions of dollars of compensation for Vincent and others upon successful completion of an agreement regarding Resolution 986." For his efforts, "the Government of Iraq delivered millions of dollars in cash to Vincent and others."

After the resolution was adopted, Vincent and his patrons sought to have the sanctions ended altogether. From 1998 to 2003, Vincent tried to prevail upon former U.S. government officials with ties to top Clinton and Bush administration officials who might press his case with their powerful friends. Among those he contacted was former U.S. representative and GOP vice presidential candidate Jack Kemp, who had long opposed the sanctions. (*Newsweek* magazine reported this week that the FBI has interviewed Kemp. Although Kemp reportedly approached Colin Powell and Dick Cheney about back-channel communications with Vincent and later announced his intention to launch a "21st Century Marshall Plan" with the Iraqi American, there is no indication that Kemp is the target of an investigation.) Vincent reported on his progress to the Iraqi Intelligence Service and others working for Saddam.

Not all of Vincent's efforts were secretive. In 1999, Vincent arranged for three Iraqi religious leaders to visit the United States to denounce the U.N. sanctions. The delegation met with the evangelist Billy Graham and former president Jimmy Carter—meetings Vincent arranged.

Vincent faces up to 28 years in prison—not a promising outlook for someone in his mid-sixties, so he is cooperating with the authorities.

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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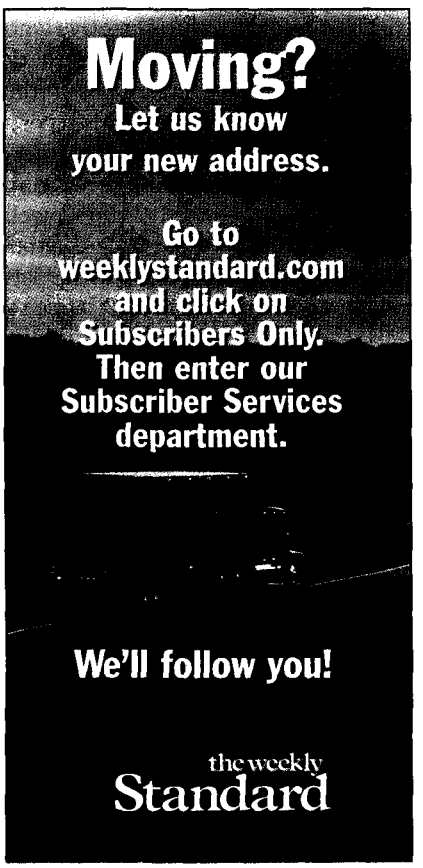
What will we learn by pulling on the Samir Vincent thread? That's hard to know. Saddam Hussein's government, and particularly his intelligence services, compartmentalized information so that very few individuals had a full understanding of its operations.

Still, the 16-page document charging Vincent contains enough information to make many people nervous. To cite two examples: On page 4 we learn that Vincent "and other individuals, *including United Nations officials*, met in Manhattan in an effort to secure terms favorable to the Government of Iraq in connection with the adoption and implementation of Resolution 986" [emphasis added]. And on page 7 that Vincent "distributed *to another individual* a cash payment from the Government of Iraq in partial satisfaction of the agreements" to work for Saddam's regime [emphasis added].

Who are these individuals? Prosecutors know. And it won't be long before we do, too. ♦



And They're Off!

The 2008 handicapping begins.

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

TOO EARLY for Republicans to fret about 2008? Never! Before last week's inaugural fireworks had even been lit, the handicapping of 2008 Republican hopefuls was well underway. GOP sources slice the potential '08ers into an A-list and a Blist. Here's a quick roundup of who's where, as President Bush kicks off Act Two. First the A-listers:

• **John McCain.** To conservative eyes, the Arizona senator has a lengthy rap sheet. McCain championed campaign-finance reform. He piqued the Christian Right in 2000. He opposed Bush's 2001 and 2003 tax cuts. He supports embryonic stem-cell research. And he's backed a host of other media-friendly issues—anti-tobacco legislation, a patients' bill of rights, gun control, CO_2 emissions caps—that conservatives spurn.

But after the 2004 election, McCain's star is rising. He campaigned robustly for President Bush. That helped quash the residual bitterness of 2000. Also, McCain gave a superb speech at the Republican convention, in which he made a cogent case for the Iraq war. Still, his maverick bent will prove a burden. McCain's other big minus? He turns 72 in 2008. His big plus? Thanks to his Vietnam heroism and crossover appeal, he's the candidate Democrats fear most.

• **Rudy Giuliani.** It's hard to gauge how badly the Bernard Kerik fiasco hurts Giuliani long-term. On the one hand, the ex-mayor remains wildly popular and can thrill Republican crowds. On the other, Rudy's rivals will no doubt hang Kerik around his neck (along with Giuliani's two divorces and marital infidelity). But leave Kerik aside. Giuliani's true Achilles' heel is his social liberalism. He supports abortion rights—even partial-birth—and same-sex marriage. Ditto gun control. To win a GOP primary, Rudy must pipe up about his conservative strengths, namely, fighting bad guys at home and abroad. For no matter how weak his hand might appear, Giuliani still holds two aces: his remarkable transformation of New York City and his post-9/11 resiliency.

Of course, as memories of 9/11 recede, so might Giuliani's stature as "America's mayor." He could always boost his stock with a successful Senate or gubernatorial bid in 2006. Rudy "will be an early frontrunner," says one GOP insider. But "ultimately, I don't think he gets nominated."

• **Bill Frist.** Unlike Giuliani's and McCain's, Frist's fortunes are partly tied to President Bush. As Senate majority leader, Frist will earn credit—or blame—based on how much of the Bush agenda he shepherds through. If Bush gets tax, Social Security, or tort reform, it will be a feather in Frist's cap. He has a two-year window. Self-term limited, Frist won't seek reelection in 2006.

The Tennessee senator projects an amiable, mild demeanor. But he is no moderate Republican. Certainly in a three-way Giuliani-McCain-Frist race, Frist would stand out as a staunch conservative. He would also be the GOP establishment's choice. Frist may lack the dynamism and perceived toughness of Giuliani and McCain. But post-2004 election, he sounds hardened, especially when talking judges.

• **Mitt Romney.** He could be the

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sleeper candidate. Of all the A-listers, Romney is the only governor. And historically, as conservative activist Grover Norquist points out, "governors trump senators." Many governors lack real homeland security credentials—but not Romney. He can tout his work as chief of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. Nor is Romney a Massachusetts Republican in the William Weld mold. He's much more conservative, proposing hefty tax relief and bucking his state's highest court on same-sex marriage. Also, as a GOP insider notes, Romney is good on TV and "richer than Steve Forbes."

Romney's baggage? He's famously fuzzy on abortion. Primary voters won't like that. Then there's his faith. Will evangelical Christians pull the lever for a Mormon? An awkward question, but one Republicans have raised. Perhaps sensing this, Romney met with a gathering of evangelicals last week in Washington, before hosting a reception for Bay State natives serving in the Bush administration.

Now for the B-listers:

• **Bill Owens.** Colorado's governor once seemed a prime candidate. Conservatives loved him. He had taken on a bevy of Democratic interest groups and emerged triumphant. A September 2002 *National Review* cover story proclaimed Owens "America's Best Governor." Several months later, he pushed through a landmark school-voucher bill. Since then, however, Owens separated from his wife of almost 30 years. And in the 2004 election, Colorado Republicans took a thrashing, losing both houses of the state legislature. Owens can claim a slew of conservative feats. But he lacks a fundraising base, and his '08 prospects seem to be fading.

• **Chuck Hagel.** "Hagel has kind of fallen off the map," says a leading GOP strategist. Nebraska's maverick senator certainly strikes a unique pose. Hagel serves up red meat on abortion, taxes, guns, and spending, but also tends toward a dovish view of U.S. foreign policy. In 2002, he criticized Bush's "axis of evil" phrase as "name-calling" and rebuked the "rush to wage war" in Iraq. More recently, Hagel, a Vietnam vet, slammed Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over the war's conduct. Such anti-Bush positions will hardly endear him to rank-and-file Republicans.

• **George Allen.** As one GOP insider puts it, Virginia's junior senator would be the "conservative's conservative" in the race, à la Phil Gramm in 1996. But whereas Gramm came across as a curmudgeon, Allen, 52, sports youthful good looks and an easygoing charm. He also boasts executive experience. Allen governed Virginia from 1994 to 1998. A reliable pro-life tax-cutter, he sits just to the right of George W. Bush. "Allen runs as Ronald Reagan," predicts Norquist.

• **George Pataki.** Not only is he the most liberal Republican in the '08 pool, Gov. Pataki also finds himself overshadowed by fellow New Yorker Rudy Giuliani. Pataki's only saving grace could be his home state. Were he able to deliver New York, that would cripple the Democrats. Otherwise, Pataki doesn't have much going for him.

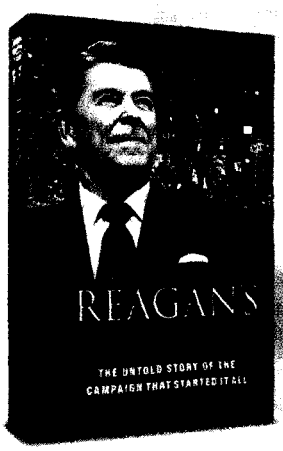
This list is far from exhaustive. One of the most enticing—but very unlikely—candidates remains Dick Cheney. A few right-wingers have already pondered a quixotic "Draft Cheney" campaign, urging Bush's VP to throw his hat in the ring. Cheney has long disavowed any interest in the presidency. But with ample prodding, and a solid second term for Bush, who knows?

Then, of course, there's Florida governor Jeb Bush, whom the *Economist* calls "the best candidate by far." Jeb has publicly ruled out a White House bid in 2008. But his paper trail makes him a conservative glamour boy. The genial Jeb is a pro-life, pro-voucher, tax-slashing, budget-trimming Reaganite. Absent a marquee '08er, Republicans will look favorably on Gov. Bush—and wish he had a different last name. ♦

"If you want to understand the roots and rising of Republican domination in Washington today, read Craig Shirley's masterful account..."

–Howard Fineman

THE REVOLUTION ...Continues



REAGAN'S REVOLUTION:

The Untold Story of the Campaign that Started It All

By Craig Shirley

How did Republicans take control of The White House, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives? Read about how one campaign launched a conservative movement and transformed American politics forever...

Craig Shirley recounts the fascinating story of Reagan's 1976 presidential campaign—which, in essence, redefined the Republican party, reshaped national politics, and [illegible] of liberalism.

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The Whole Region Is Watching

What Iraq's election means for the Middle East.

BY MARC GINSBERG

RICHARD DALEY, the late mayor of Chicago and a master of ward politics, would have been proud. In a Baghdad suburb last week, activists for Prime Minister Allawi's "Iraqi List" were handing out the Middle Eastern equivalent of "walking around money" to Arab media covering the election—a little "baksheesh," in advance, for a kind story. Each journalist received a spanking new one-hundred dollar bill, ostensibly for braving the perils of Iraq's mean streets.

It's election time in Iraq. Campaign posters are plastered all over Sadr City, a Shiite slum in Baghdad. Political ads are filling daily newspapers, extolling parties and candidates, only a few of whom dare go door to door looking for votes. Even Iraq's fledgling Communist party is getting in on the act. Their slogan, "Communism is stronger than death and higher than the gallows," refers to the many Communist party leaders who were hanged by Saddam.

If prime minister Allawi has his way, on January 30 millions of Iraqis will courageously venture to polling stations (their locations as yet unknown to protect them from attack). This unprecedented expression of Iraqi democratic will should make for a remarkable testimony to the people's courage and their determination to be done with the old order.

Iraq's voters are the principal players in the great moral showdown, taking place in Osama bin Laden's backyard, between democracy and Islamic dictatorship. Next Sunday's vote will represent an unprecedented experiment in Arab democracy, a major step in fulfilling President Bush's ambitious goal, as laid down in his second inaugural speech, to set the Middle East on a path to liberty and freedom from tyranny.

Bin Laden and extremist clerics have brainwashed their followers into believing that Muslims must only be governed by Islamic religious laws, and not by man-made laws promulgated by mere elected officials. Voting in elections is, in their book, a defiance of Allah's ultimate jurisdiction over the conduct of humans. This edict finds its roots in *Signposts on the Road* by Sayyid Qutb, the ideological godfather of Osma bin Laden: "In the world there is only one party, the party of Allah; all of the others are parties of Satan and rebellion."

The election, granted, won't be perfect. It will proceed under a boycott, called by many Sunni leaders, and in the face of insurgent violence as well as a dire warning from Osama bin Laden that "anyone who participates in these elections has committed apostasy against Allah."

And while the precise outcome—including whether the election will steal the thunder from the insurgents or the insurgents will succeed in their efforts to significantly disrupt voting—cannot be known, it is sure to be an incredible day. Oh, what a spectacle this event will make as televisions all over the election-starved Arab and Muslim world broadcast images of Iraqis exercising their suffrage.

From Casablanca to Tehran, the chattering masses are surely already pondering how open democratic elections can be held in Iraq—and Palestine—and not elsewhere in the region. Why not also in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Lebanon, and Egypt?

While Washington hopes that the elections will represent an important first step toward freedom and prosperity throughout the Middle East, Arab heads of state worry that uncorking the democratic genie could escalate the threat of civil war in Iraq, perhaps leading to its disintegration. They also fear it could unleash unquenchable demands for democratic reform at home with dire consequences to their own hold on power.

For Sunni enemies of freedom, there is also the added discomfort of watching a member of the home team—a Sunni-dominated regime—on the run. The terrorist Abu Musab al arqawi has referred to the Shia as "the lurking snakes and the crafty scorpions, the spying enemy and the penetrating venom."

Rather than applaud the transition from dictatorship to democracy in Iraq, some Arab leaders and commentators have dismissed the elections, deeming the process illegitimate and unrepresentative.

In November 2004, during a visit to Egypt, Iraqi interim prime minister Ayad Allawi, a Shiite, appealed to his fellow Arab leaders to help him persuade Sunnis to participate in the election. Several leaders gave him the cold shoulder, or paid only lip service to his pleas. Others demanded that representatives of the Sunni insurgency be invited to the resulting summit, since otherwise their interests would not be "represented" at the gathering. (What is the Arab word for "chutzpah"?)

In a November 25 article entitled "Democratic Occupation?" columnist Salama Ni'mat, the Washington bureau chief of the London Arabic-language daily *Al-Hayat*, irately noted Arab leaders' contempt for democracy and lack of concern for their Muslim brethren in Iraq:

Marc Ginsberg, U.S. ambassador to Morocco during the Clinton administration, is managing director of Northstar Equity Group, an affiliate of APCO Worldwide in Washington, D.C.

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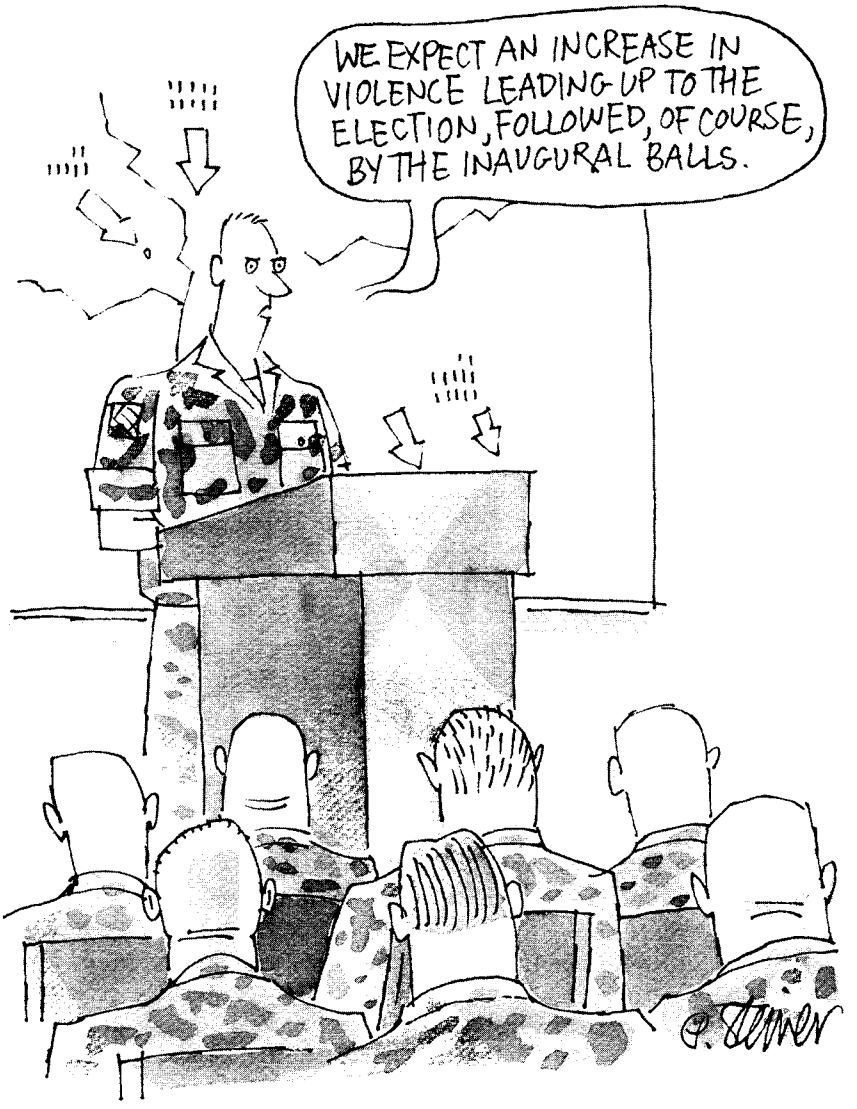

Peter Steiner

> It is sad and pathetic that the eyes of the entire world are upon the Palestinian and Iraqi elections that will be held under the lances of foreign occupation, while the peoples of the 'independent, free, and sovereign Arab countries' have no way of expressing their will. It is sad and pathetic that certain [Arab] countries today are treating the Iraqis with the cheapest kind of political hypocrisy, even though no one heard any particular Arab protest during the time of the regime of the mass graves.

But even among the naysayers, Syria stands out. Its Baathist clique has made a great effort to sabotage the elections, leaving its fingerprints all over the violence in Iraq. Its ruling tribe, the Assad Alawites, know full well that if an open election were held in Syria, they would shortly become a reviled minority within a minority. Iraqi prime minister Allawi has pulled no punches with Damascus. He has repeatedly accused Syria of hosting "wanted elements," including Saddam's former vice president Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri—believed to be one of the masterminds responsible for funding and commanding the insurgency.

Coalition and Iraqi intelligence continue to track a steady stream of insurgency financing and communications back to safe havens in Syria. Will Syria ever be held accountable for blatant interference in Iraq's internal affairs? Perhaps.

Arab leaders are under increasing internal pressure to reform. The question facing Arab rulers is whether they are prepared to sail with or against these winds of change. Fortuitously, there are faint stirrings of democratic reform throughout the Arab Middle East.

In Egypt, parliamentary and presidential elections are approaching later this year. Three Egyptians have dared to say they intend to challenge incumbent President Hosni Mubarak, who is almost certainly planning to "run" for a fifth six-year term. There is just one obstacle. Under Egypt's constitution, the challengers must first secure a constitutional amendment, since current law allows for there to be only one candidate for president. That "candidate" is nominated by the Egyptian parliament, 85 percent of whose seats are under the control of Mubarak's party.

In Saudi Arabia, elections for, albeit toothless, town councils are to be held next month. But even this feeble step forward might be seen as the beginning of Saudi Arabia's slow emancipation from the shackles of Wahhabism.

In Morocco, King Mohammed has bravely introduced new laws protecting the rights of women and has undertaken other reforms that deserve admiration and duplication elsewhere in the Arab world.

But, by any objective measure, outside of Palestine and Iraq, serious democratic reform is, sadly, not underway. What one sees elsewhere in the Middle East are baby steps, modest incremental changes that may in fact be nothing more than a distraction intended to buy time for these despotic regimes.

If, as President Bush stated on January 20, "the survival of liberty in our land depends on the success of liberty in other lands," then the first test of democracy in Iraq will lead to other breakthroughs for democracy in the Middle East. What happens in Iraq on January 30 and what becomes of this great experiment may determine whether George Bush's inaugural challenge to the Arab world is empty rhetoric or a provident foreshadowing of positive change to come. ♦

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Jihad in Jersey City?

The murder of a Coptic family raises disturbing questions. BY OLIVIER GUITTA

DEPENDING ON the outcome of the investigation, a recent grisly murder in Jersey City, New Jersey, may be a sign of things to come in our domestic war on terror.

On Friday, January 14, 2005, police discovered the bodies of a family of four Egyptian Copts slain in their home. Hossam Armanious, 47, his wife, Amal, 37, and their daughters Sylvia, 15, and Monica, 8, had been bound, gagged, and their throats slit.

The motive for the quadruple slaying has not yet been established. FBI agents are assisting with the investigation. Hudson County prosecutors say the killers refrained from taking expensive jewelry, but Armanious's wallet had been emptied and his pockets turned out.

"We know that money was taken," said prosecutor Edward De Fazio. "Whether that was the primary motivation, we don't know. To think that someone would commit this type of crime for a small amount of money does not make sense."

According to friends and relatives, the family was not particularly wealthy. Hossam Armanious was a headwaiter and his wife a postal clerk. Interestingly, assistant prosecutor Guy Gregory said, "It doesn't appear to be random. It appears to be a specific act. Someone was able to gain access without forcing entry."

Another possible motive that is being reviewed is religious hatred. Armanious was active in Internet chat rooms defending the Copts against Islamic extremists. The Coptic church, whose presence in Egypt goes back nearly 2,000 years, has suffered persecution off and on over the centuries, intensifying in the last 10 years. Armanious had reportedly received a death threat online: "We will hunt you down . . . and kill you." Investigators have taken a computer from the children's bedroom. And according to the *New York Post*, a relative of Jersey City mayor Jerramiah Healy said there was information the murders were "religion-related."

Additional disturbing details point in this direction. First, the brutality and methodology of the crime do not fit the profile for simple robbery but rather call to mind the Islamist killings of Western hostages like Daniel Pearl in Pakistan and Nick Berg in Iraq.

In addition, the investigators acknowledge that a relative of the victims had helped prosecutors in their case against lawyer Lynne Stewart, currently on trial in Manhattan for allegedly carrying messages for her imprisoned client, the blind Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, serving a life sentence for conspiring to blow up New York landmarks including the United Nations building.

The investigators downplay a possible connection between the Armanious case and the Stewart trial. What remains suggestive, however, is that the Armanious murder occurred in what some nickname "Terror City" because of its history of Islamic extremist activity.

Jersey City gained this reputation after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, on February 26, 1993, which was carried out by a local terrorist cell. The van used in the attack was rented in Jersey City, the bomb was built in several Jersey City apartments, and the perpetrators frequented the Jersey City mosque presided over by Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman. Indeed, Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 attack, made contact with followers of the blind Egyptian sheikh upon his arrival in the United States. Through the mosque, he met Mohammed A. Salameh, Nidal A. Ayyad, and Mahmud Abouhalima, all of whom participated in the attack.

According to terrorism expert Steven Emerson, Alkhifa, a precursor to al Qaeda, had one of its main offices in Jersey City. Soon after September 11, in November 2001, a reporter from the Canadian daily *National Post*, Marina Jimenez, visited the Jersey City mosque undercover. In an article entitled "The radicalization of U.S. Muslims," she noted the stern warning posted in front of the mosque: "Those who do not belong to this Muslim community will be prosecuted for trespassing." The mosque's Egyptian-born imam, Sheikh Mohammed, she reported, called for a show of loyalty not to the United States, but to oppressed Muslims around the world, especially in Chechnya, Palestine, and Afghanistan, echoing Osama bin Laden's message.

Whatever the motive turns out to have been for the horrible Armanious murders, they have sparked fear among Copts in the United States. Fred Ayed, the deacon at St. George and St. Shenouda Church where the victims attended services, said, "I am concerned for the safety of our community." Moheb Ghabour, publisher of a local Coptic newspaper, added, "People are scared because one family was slain like cows."

If it turns out that this violent crime had a religious motivation, then—like the Dutch after the brutal murder last November of filmmaker Theo van Gogh for sharply criticizing Islam—we will be forced to recognize that major attacks such as September 11 are not the only way that terrorism can strike us here at home. ♦

Olivier Guitta is a freelance writer specializing in Islam and Europe.

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Just the Right Amount of God

George Bush delivers the most philosophical inaugural address ever

By Joseph Bottum

"Who is your favorite political philosopher?" a group of Republican candidates were asked early in the 2000 race for president. And the frontrunner at the time, a Texas governor named George W. Bush, calmly answered, "Christ, because he changed my life."

Well. You could barely hear the other candidates' answers in the crash and clatter of overturned chairs as reporters scrambled to reach the phones and call in the story. Some commentators decided Bush was nakedly pandering to Evangelical voters in a Machiavellian ploy so bold that he should have said his favorite political philosopher was, um, Machiavelli.

Most of the nation's chatterers, however, decided that this wasn't the devious Bush but the stupid Bush. Couldn't he come up with the name of an actual philosopher? Plato had a scribble called the *Republic*, Aristotle managed to jot down a few notes on politics, and in the long years since the ancient Greeks there have been a few other philosophical types who've set out a thought or two on the political order. A little more study time—a little less fraternizing with his drinking buddies—and Bush might have heard their names while he was an undergraduate, even at Yale.

And then there was the mockery the candidate faced for his confusion of piety with philosophy. The holy name of Jesus doesn't have much purchase on people for whom "Christian" is mostly shorthand for "life-denying bigots who want to burn all the books they're too ignorant to read." Besides, from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible that Bush claims to follow manifests deep suspicion of the philosophical. The Lord will do "a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder," as the prophet Isaiah put it, "for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." If Bush understood the Book of Acts, he'd remember the Apostle Paul didn't have much success preaching the Resurrection to philosophers in Athens.

Bad theology, bad philosophy, and bad politics—this was the high-minded consensus at the time. The identification of Jesus as a life-changing political philosopher was either a stroke of electoral genius, or a mark of jaw-dropping feeblemindedness, or—well, that's always been the problem for Bush's opponents, hasn't it? "I can't believe I'm losing to this idiot," John Kerry whined to his aides during the 2004 campaign, and George W. Bush still remains impenetrable to those who persist in seeing him as some impossible combination of Dr. Evil and Forrest Gump. Anyway, the consensus was that he didn't mean—*couldn't* mean—anything philosophical by his answer to a reporter's question.

Funny thing. On a cold, bright day in January 2005, with the sun off the snow crinkling his eyes, President Bush gave his second inaugural address. And it seems he did actually mean what he had said before. The speech was as clear an assertion of a particular Christian political philosophy as we're likely to hear in these latter days. "We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom," the president declared. "Not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability; it is human choices that move events. Not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation; God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul."

There's even a name for this kind of theistical philosophy. It's called natural law. An inaugural address, by its very national purpose, walks the tightrope between powerful abstractions and empty platitudes, and sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. "In America's ideal of free-

Joseph Bottum is Books & Arts editor of The Weekly Standard.

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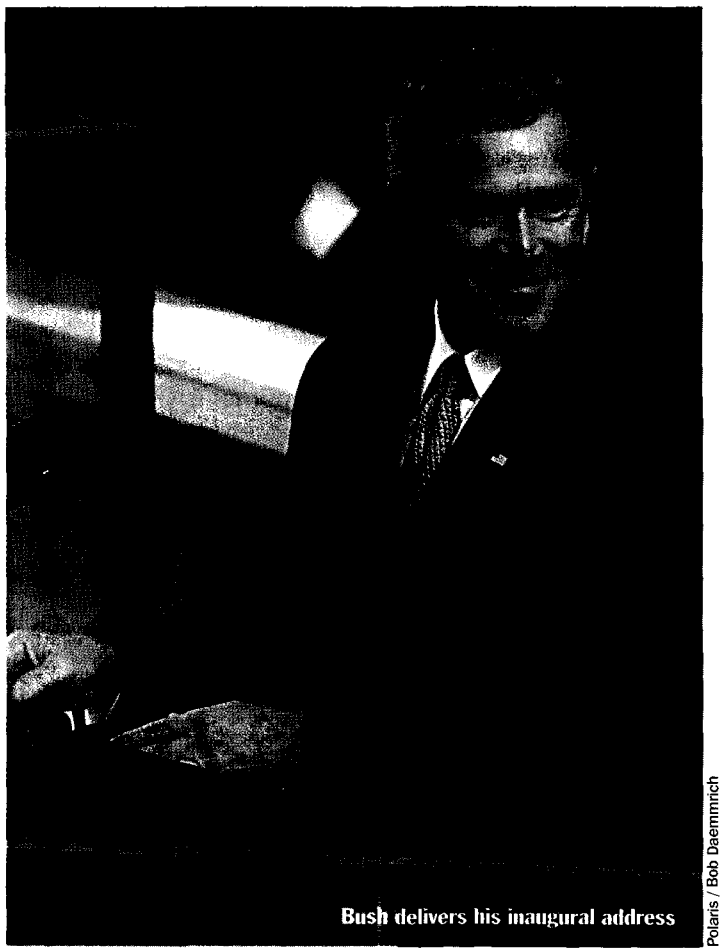
dom, the exercise of rights is ennobled by service, and mercy, and a heart for the weak," Bush said, and is that a truth or a truism? A wrenching call to greatness or a self-congratulatory pat on the back?

A little of both, no doubt. But the most interesting things in Bush's inaugural rhetoric are the moments where justifications are offered for the various truths and truisms. The chain of explanation in his speech is always the logical progression of the natural-law argument. "Americans, of all people, should never be surprised by the power of our ideals," Bush insisted. And why? Because there is, in fact, a universal human nature: "Eventually, the call of freedom comes to every mind and every soul." If "across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government," the reason must reside in the enduring essence of human beings as simultaneously corruptible and morally valuable: "Because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave."



Bush delivers his inaugural address

Polaris / Bob Daemmrich

As it happens, a natural-law explanation carries philosophical reasoning a step beyond the mere assertion of a nature for human beings. The problem for ethics is always how to match empirical and logical claims ("Humans want to be free") with moral claims ("Humans *should* be free"). And, within philosophy, natural law is a way of bridging the gap by asserting a unity of fact and value—based on the endowment of human nature with moral worth by the model on which humans are based. "From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value," as President Bush explained. And the reason? Well, "because they bear the image of the Maker of heaven and earth."

Now, any philosopher would point out that this is possible only if the moral law itself is real: a set of eternal truths that vary not in content but only in application as the temporal order changes. And, sure enough, there the necessary postulate is in Bush's speech: "Americans move forward in every generation by reaffirming all that is good and true that came before—ideals of justice and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever."

And watch it all come together as Bush reaches toward his peroration in the speech's penultimate moment: "When our Founders declared a new order of the ages; when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty; when citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner 'Freedom Now'—they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled. History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty."

So, we've got an enduring and universal human nature ("ancient hope"). We've got final causation ("meant to be fulfilled"). We've got a moral problematic (the "ebb and flow of justice"). We've got intelligible formal causes (the ideal of "liberty" as shaping a "visible direction" for history). And we've even got a prime mover ("the Author of Liberty"). There isn't much more a natural-law philosopher could want in an American president's inaugural address about nature and nature's God. I'd guess not a lot of gloating is allowed around the throne of the Maker of heaven and earth, but somewhere in the vicinity, St. Thomas Aquinas must be smiling.

But in certain sublunary realms, there are others who are not smiling at all. "Way Too Much God" ran the headline in the *Wall Street Journal*, over a column in which former Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan bemoaned the president's triumphalist religiosity.

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The speech concerned Bush's "evolving thoughts on freedom in the world," Noonan observed. And "those thoughts seemed marked by deep moral seriousness and no moral modesty." She had in mind, of course, the curious humility and even melancholy of Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address—as well she ought, for Lincoln remains the high-water mark of presidential rhetoric, and Bush's speech was clearly striving at points to echo its unmatchable predecessor.

And if a solid Republican like Peggy Noonan is bothered by the president's God-besotted, un-Lincolnian immodesty, you can imagine what the reaction was among the president's detractors. But what's missed by all those who unfairly compare Bush's zeal with Lincoln's call to humility is, in part, the timing of the latter, for the end of the Civil War was at hand by the time Lincoln spoke, while we are still in the thick of the struggle Bush describes. Even more, there is a hard edge of determination for victory that runs through Lincoln's speech—a steel in his sadness that gives a hidden force to his demand for national humility. The 1865 inaugural address was not the breast-beating some read in it today.

Perhaps that's why Abraham Lincoln delivered the most theological presidential speech ever given. It is our great national sermon. "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

In this sense, Bush's speech in the Washington snow isn't theological at all. This is not Christ the sacrificial lamb, or Christ the New Adam who breaks the curse of Original Sin. This is rather Christ the philosopher—and George W. Bush has just delivered the most purely philosophical address in the history of America's inaugurations.

As it happens, the natural-law philosophy the speech asserted has a little bit to bother everyone in it. The president's Evangelical supporters may have been reassured by the public religiosity of the occasion—the prayers, the Navy choir singing "God of Our Fathers," the bowed heads. But the god of the philosophers ain't much of a god to be going home with. A deistical clockmaker, an impersonal prime mover, a demiurge instead of a redeemer: This is hardly the faith Christian Americans imagine the president shares with them. There was not a mention of the Divine in Bush's speech that Thomas Jefferson couldn't have uttered.

Still, all that God-talk—all that natural-law reasoning—was heading somewhere in Bush's speech, and the president's cultured despisers, those who tremble or rage at any trace of divinity in public, are right to be afraid. Just not for the reason they think. It would take an act of perverse will to suppose that the 2005 inaugural address signaled the onset of a Christian theocracy in America. Every rhetorical gesture toward God was either universalized up into a sectless abstraction ("Author of Liberty"? Which faith group can't say that?) or spread down in careful pluralistic specificity ("the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people").

No, President Bush's opponents should be afraid of this speech because it signals the emergence of a single coherent philosophy within the conservative movement. Natural-law reasoning about the national moral character gradually disappeared from America in the generations after the Founding Fathers, squeezed out between a triumphant emotive liberalism, on the one side, and a defensive emotive Evangelicalism, on the other. Preserved mostly by the Catholics, natural law made its return to public discourse primarily through the effort to find a nontheological ground for opposition to abortion. And now, three decades after *Roe* v. *Wade*, it is simply the way conservatives talk—about everything. With his inaugural address, President Bush has just delivered a foreign-policy discourse that relies entirely on classical concepts of natural law, and, agreeing or not, everybody in America understood what he was talking about.

In other words, the argument over abortion changed the way the nation speaks of every moral issue. "We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right. America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains, or that women welcome humiliation and servitude, or that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies," the president declares—and thereby carries natural law out to the world.

This is a claim about the universal, which the old foreign-policy realists rejected. This is a claim about the moral, which the libertarians despised. And this is a claim about the eternal, which the Social Darwinists renounced. But these older strains of conservatism have lost the battle to set the nation's rhetoric. They are welcome to come along for the ride, but George W. Bush announced, there in the bright cold of a Washington January, that the nation would be moving to the beat of a different political philosophy.

Turns out he really did mean what he said five years ago. ♦

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AIDS in Africa—a Betrayal

There was one success story; its lessons were embraced by the Bush administration; now U.S. aid bureaucrats are subverting it.

By Edward C. Green

For many years, there was an open secret in the battle against AIDS in Africa. A few of us knew about, and earnestly sought to publicize, crucial findings indicating the most effective approach to AIDS prevention. Yet the "experts" in the field didn't want to hear. Our secret was that the country that had best succeeded in curbing the spread of HIV—Uganda—had achieved this result without following the formula the experts had been pushing for over 20 years, namely, condoms, drugs, and testing. Instead, Uganda had achieved its unparalleled decline in the prevalence of HIV with a home-grown, low-cost program built around something offensive to conventional experts: promotion of sexual abstinence and fidelity, with condoms promoted only quietly, to high-risk groups and those already infected.

The figures are startling. Through a public-information campaign backed by local medical personnel, pastors, and imams and reinforced in schools, Uganda reduced its HIV rate from 15 percent to 4 percent between 1991 and 2004, according to a U.N. calculation.

Not surprisingly, information about what was actually working in Uganda was unpopular. Condoms have been regarded as the first line of defense for everyone, everywhere, and anyone who disagrees with this orthodoxy has been dismissed as a religious fanatic with "an agenda." Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on condom social marketing (a field I myself worked in for several years) and on related medical-pharmaceutical solutions. How infuriating that an approach not funded by the big donors and scoffed at by foreign experts should prove to be the very thing that worked best.

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Abstinence and fidelity, of course, are precisely what religious conservatives have always argued for, and partly for this reason predominantly secular or liberal AIDS experts dismissed the possibility that they might work. For the fact is, as I learned during my lonely battle to broadcast the truth about Uganda, abstinence and fidelity challenge core values and attitudes enshrined by the Western sexual revolution, which taught that people, whether straight or gay, have the right to express their sexuality however they wish, as long as all participants are consenting adults and no one is hurt. Finally, few AIDS experts wanted to accept the evidence from Uganda because people do not like to admit they might have been wrong, especially in a matter involving countless millions of dollars and the lives of millions of people.

Consider this vignette, from the global AIDS conference in Bangkok in July 2004. When Simon Onaba, a 22-year-old Ugandan university student, told an audience of AIDS experts that he had abstained from sex for three years and intended to continue doing so until his wedding night, he was loudly jeered. "Oh, how nice for you!" went one reaction. "You may be able to abstain, but what about a 13-year-old Somali girl forced into marriage and subjected to genital mutilation? She doesn't have the luxury to abstain!" (As if, by choosing abstinence, Simon were somehow failing to take a stand against genital mutilation.) The experts also hurled hostile questions at Simon: How often do you masturbate, and with whom? What's your real agenda for trying to make people believe you are abstaining?

These critics seem to believe that since abstinence and fidelity may not be workable options for 5 percent of the population, they should be rejected altogether, even if they are the best option for 95 percent of the population. These numbers are not arbitrary: By 1995, only 5 percent of Ugandan males and females were reporting casual sex.

As that last figure suggests, reality is very different from

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EPA Photos / Stephen Morrison

An AIDS-awareness march along the road from Kampala to Entebbe, August 2003

the Western experts' perception. Surveys today suggest that more than half of African males and females between the ages of 15 and 19 are abstaining from premarital sex, and increasing proportions of adults are having sex with only one partner. Yet few who work in AIDS prevention have called attention to these important trends, perhaps because they contradict the image of the hypersexed African that Western AIDS experts have been selling since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic. They depict Africans as "polygamous by nature," and supposedly so driven by hormones and poverty that commercial and transactional sex, and the inability to make responsible decisions about sex, are simply part of what it means to be African. If you accept this condescending view, condoms seem to be the only realistic solution to AIDS.

The trouble with the image of the hypersexed African is that it was never true for most Africans. Meanwhile, sexual behavior in Africa has changed. Not only in Uganda, but also perhaps in Senegal, Kenya, and elsewhere, abstinence and faithfulness have worked better than condoms. I document the evidence for Uganda and Senegal in detail in my 2003 book *Rethinking AIDS Prevention*. I also show that in about 1999, Kenya switched to a Uganda-style approach. In the past four to five years, casual sex on the part of Kenyan men and women has declined by about 50 percent, and HIV infection rates have fallen.

The prevention component of President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is based on Uganda's "ABC" model: Abstain, Be faithful, or use a Condom, with condoms the last line of defense. When Congress passed the United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, it stipulated that a third of all prevention money appropriated under the bill be spent on abstinence programs. The law also allowed faith-based organizations to be funded by the U.S. government for AIDS-prevention without being *required* to promote condoms.

Reactions to these provisions in the professional AIDS community were immediate and highly emotional. There were predictions of mass death, since a dollar spent on abstinence meant a dollar less for condoms. The drumbeat for condoms continued, even though at about the same time a U.N. AIDS report concluded, "There are no definite examples yet of generalized epidemics that have been turned back by prevention programs based primarily on condom promotion." The U.S. Agency for International Development itself published a study in 2003 showing that HIV infection rates in "generalized epidemics" simply do not decline unless there are "A and B" behavioral changes—that is, increases in abstinence and fidelity.

Now, more than a year after the administration's AIDS program became law, one would expect the ABC model to have been replicated around the world. Sadly, it is not so. Instead, even in its country of origin, the model has fallen into disrepair.

Visitors to Uganda in recent years have found an AIDS-prevention program that looks more and more like that of any other country in Africa: condom social marketing, supplemented by treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, testing, and provision of nevirapine to pregnant mothers. Relentlessly pressed by Western donors including USAID to favor condoms, Uganda has started to abandon its highly effective "Be faithful" intervention strategy. A USAID officer in Uganda admitted to me (in front of the U.S. ambassador, in November 2004) that there are currently no plans for interventions that promote fidelity or partner reduction. I wrote three follow-up letters to the U.S. ambassador providing evidence that Uganda's ABC model "has been diluted and marginalized since the early '90s, largely because the international donors have exclusively or primarily promoted 'risk reduction' (condom) interventions, and have not put actual resources into abstinence/delay or faithfulness/partner-reduction interventions." (The U.S. ambassador is the head of the Bush AIDS-relief team in every participating country.) My letters went unanswered.

Already in December 2002, when I was part of a delegation that visited Uganda, we sat through a two-hour presentation by staff of USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stationed in Uganda. The title of the presentation was "What Happened in Uganda?" Not once did these American government personnel mention abstinence or faithfulness, or even partner-reduction or the decline in casual sex. They spoke exclusively about latex, drugs, vaccine research, and hopes for more medical products in the future.

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Last summer I was back in Uganda. Conspicuously missing from the national AIDS strategy and other planning documents was any sign of A or B interventions. Not missing was C: Condom initiatives were plentiful and ubiquitous. Prior to 2001, AIDS planning and policy documents were full of A and B objectives and program indicators. One of the early AIDS-prevention manuals produced by the Ugandan government, *Control of AIDS* (1989), was mostly about abstinence and faithfulness. Condoms were not even mentioned until page 32, and then the booklet originally cautioned, "The government does not recommend using condoms as a way to fight AIDS." UNICEF, which paid for the booklet, was so unhappy with this anti-condom statement that it pasted a new, more pro-condom page 32 over the original one before releasing the booklet.

EPA Photos / Stephen Morrison

A billboard advertising government-subsidized condoms, Entebbe, Uganda

Uganda is a poor country, still rebuilding its economy after the havoc wreaked by two dictators. Like other sub-Saharan nations, Uganda relies heavily on Western aid. Because they pay the bills, foreign donors have a great deal of influence on national strategy, and they have been systematically undermining Uganda's uniquely successful AIDS-prevention model. Indeed, with rare exceptions, they have simply refused to pay for programs that promote abstinence, fidelity, and reduction in the number of sexual partners. This is supposed to change under the 2003 emergency AIDS relief legislation. But change, always slow in coming, is being vigorously resisted by major AIDS donors.

A member of the Uganda AIDS Commission, after describing the central role of abstinence and faithfulness in his country's success at controlling the disease, observed to me that messages promoting abstinence and faithfulness "have somehow faded since the early 1990s. We sometimes see faded billboards that used to have AIDS messages. Now they just have messages about condoms." And during a meeting of top religious leaders in Uganda in November 2004, one cleric after another complained that they had become increasingly marginalized, while foreign experts scoffed at abstinence and faithfulness as prevention strategies.

Western donor organizations and many of the groups they support that are doing the work on the ground simply continue to promote condoms and avoid addressing sexual behavior. Even USAID, an agency I have worked under for 25 years, has failed to support adequately the goals of President Bush's plan, often awarding funds earmarked for abstinence to condom social marketing companies (especially in Uganda, of all places). This simply ensures business as usual. Most of the people and organizations who actually implement AIDS-prevention programs do not believe in or support the new ABC policy.

Senator Sam Brownback recently visited Uganda. In his trip report he confirms that Western donors, including the U.S. government, are undermining the once successful ABC model. The vast majority of prevention funds have gone to condoms, Brownback says, and "PSI, a well-known condom social marketing NGO, is still the largest U.S.-funded HIV prevention contractor in Uganda." Further, Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, the original champion of ABC, "is in a battle with Western donors to keep condom promotion out of his innovative AIDS education program in public primary schools, . . . [and] African leaders are growing resentful that U.S. dollars are contingent upon acceptance [of condoms as the main prevention strategy]."

Because of the problems Brownback and I have pointed out, the senator calls for congressional and GAO oversight over future spending under the Bush AIDS initiative, a cumbersome precaution that could easily have been avoided had USAID (and the Centers for Disease Control) simply had the humility and good sense to allow Uganda to continue an indigenous program that had already proven successful.

Last November, a number of colleagues and I published a statement in the *Lancet* about what works best in preventing sexually transmitted HIV in Africa. It reflects Uganda's ABC prevention strategy in the early years, when sexual behavior changed most dramatically. Some 150 scientists and the president of Uganda endorsed the statement. Unfortunately, it is by no means clear that empirical evidence can overcome ideological blinders or compete with the big business in pharmaceutical products that AIDS prevention has become. As a result, not only the improved AIDS situation in Uganda, but also the integrity of President Bush's entire global AIDS-prevention strategy, are in jeopardy. ♦

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Bleeding Kansas in the 1850s. Bettmann / CORBIS

This Almost Chosen People

Marilynne Robinson's novel of America's Protestant soul By Gregory Feeley

"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" the prophet Jeremiah once asked. "Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

With *Gilead*, Marilynne Robinson has written a profound study of the Protestant roots of the American soul, a moving story that begins in gentle retrospection and affirmations of family love but quickly turns to questions of moral responsibility and conscience, which frames it with Old Testament severity.

Gilead is only Robinson's second novel, and it has been a long wait since *Housekeeping*, her previous novel, appeared in 1981. *Housekeeping*, which won Robinson a celebrity that remains undiminished after a quarter century, is a mysterious, lyrical work that resists all but the most reductive summary. Walker Percy called it "a haunting dream of a story told in a language as sharp and clear as light and air and water," and his brief remark catches both the novel's odd way with narrative (it seems less a story than a dream of one) and the pervasive, shimmering water imagery that every reader has noticed. Water may be "sharp and clear" but it also refracts and distorts, and *Housekeeping*—a novel whose every beautiful paragraph seems as limpid and sharp as a glimpse of pebble on a lake bottom—ripples and wavers, a book one can love without claiming, even after multiple readings, to understand.

Gilead
by Marilynne Robinson
Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 247 pp., $23

Like *Housekeeping*, *Gilead* is a first-person narrative, a voice speaking from a small-town America of some decades ago. Four of its characters are named John Ames, of successive generations, and it is the third who narrates it. Born in 1880, John Ames III is a resident of Gilead, Iowa, from which he now writes at the age of seventy-six a long letter to his young son (who is not the fourth John Ames; things are more complex than that), which his son is to read only as an adult, long after his father is dead. We are, perhaps, reading along with that son, a generation after 1956, the words of one long dead.

Son of a minister whose life was dominated by the legacy of his own father, a fiery abolitionist who came from Maine to Kansas in the 1830s, the narrator—himself a minister—spends many pages discussing the conflict and final estrangement between the first John Ames ("In course of time I learned that my grandfather was involved pretty deeply in the violence in Kansas before the war") and the second (who once cried to his father, "I remember when you walked to the pulpit in that shot-up, bloody shirt with that pistol in your belt. And I had a thought as powerful and clear as any revelation. And it was, This has *nothing* to do with Jesus"). The present John Ames claims to be writing to offer his

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Bettmann / CORBIS

son various insights he will not live to relate in person, but he ends up repeatedly returning to these nearly century-old matters. They prey on his mind, for reasons the reader must try to work out.

Robinson's anguished but perhaps unreliable narrator circles back and forth, worrying about current problems—including the return of the fourth John Ames, his godson and namesake, a prodigal son who now seems to be paying attention to his wife—while refusing to let go of his tormenting past. At one point (it is perhaps the emotional center of the novel, although Robinson characteristically gives us no warning), he recalls a story his father once told him, of hearing sounds one night as a boy and going outside to see John Brown's mule make its way down the steps of his father's church. Several horses, one ridden by a wounded man, followed and disappeared into the darkness, and the boy spent hours cleaning blood and manure off the church floor—only to discover that a soldier had already come by and guessed the elder Reverend Ames's involvement in Brown's activities. The events of that night created a rift between father and son that neither their later service in the Civil War, nor their shared ministry afterward, sufficed to bridge. It is this terrible divide, Biblical in resonance, that their son and grandson, come so late to fatherhood, must obsessively contemplate.

Gilead is a tale of sons as profoundly as *Housekeeping* is one of daughters, and in many ways it seems the mirror opposite of the earlier novel. Its imagery is overwhelmingly that of light: sunlight, lightning, fire, divine radiance, illumination and its lack.

While *Housekeeping*'s eerie dreaminess precluded much of what must be called social consciousness, *Gilead*—anchored in a specific era, as the hovering, almost immaterial *Housekeeping* is not—is charged with it. "Remembering and forgiving can be contrary things," reflects Ames, the narrator, on his way to an unwelcome self-recognition.

His voice is the novel's texture: well-meaning, not entirely honest with himself, deeply troubled. The Reverend Ames begins a letter to his son, uncertain why he is doing so, and 245 pages later concludes it. This letter—bereft of chapter divisions, titled sections, or any other traditional literary appurtenance—is what we have: the entirety of a novel that discloses and withholds, dramatizing the swerves and evasions of an unquiet soul uneasy with his life even as it nears its end.

In the sere beauty of its prose and the fierceness of its passion, *Gilead* is a work of startling power: a seemingly simple artifice that reveals more complex and finer structures the closer we approach it. It is a subtle, gorgeously wrought, and immensely moving novel. ♦

Young Nazis

The purpose of the Hitler Youth movement.

BY JACK FISCHEL

Hitler Youth
by Michael H. Kater
Harvard University Press, 355 pp., $27.95

Facing defeat at the hands of the Allies in the closing weeks of World War II, Adolf Hitler received, for purposes of boosting morale, a contingent of twenty teenage soldiers in his Reich chancellery bunker. The youngest was twelve years old, and all of them had already perpetrated atrocities against the Soviet army in defense of Berlin, for which they had been awarded the Iron Cross. As Michael Kater informs us in *Hitler Youth*, his riveting history of the Nazis' use of children, these were no ordinary youngsters but members of the Hitler Youth who were drafted for military duty in the waning days of the Third Reich.

Kater, a distinguished research professor emeritus at York University, Toronto, and the author of several important books on the social and cultural history of Nazi Germany, has written an indispensable study. *Hitler Youth* focuses on the methods used by the

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Nazis to indoctrinate young boys and girls—from ten to eighteen years old—to follow authority and sacrifice for Adolf Hitler. When Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933, there were over 100,000 Nazi Youth. By December 1936, the numbers had reached 5.4 million, and by 1939 membership was compulsory for all teenagers.

The numbers, however, do not reflect the unpopularity of the "Hitler Jugend" among some German teenagers. Kater devotes a chapter to this relatively unknown phenomenon, as he details the frequent street battles between youth gangs and the Hitler Youth. The author informs us, for example, that one gang, the Leipzig Meuten, used the slogan, "Beat the HJ wherever you come across them." At the height of World War II, the Leipzig Meuten were estimated to number about 1,500 members.

But despite the existence of some dissidents, the reality was that most German teenagers were zealous members of the Hitler Youth, and they enthusiastically embraced the ideology and martial program of the Third Reich. Hitler's aim in creating the organization was to prepare soldiers to fight Germany's inevitable wars in the East, an objective which he shared with his inner circle from the moment he became chancellor in 1933. Much of the training for the Hitler Youth entailed the use of firearms, and, as Kater notes, weapon training sharpened the boys' attitudes for real-life combat. In addition to being groomed for warfare, the Hitler Youth were also trained to show little mercy for their enemies on the battlefield. Another integral feature of the education of Hitler Youth was indoctrination to hate Jews.

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Above: Hitler Youth salute the Führer in 1937. Below: A Hitler Youth captured in 1945.

Although some of the anti-Semitic attitudes German youth were exposed to originated in their homes and schools, joining the Hitler Youth reinforced these beliefs. Through a steady diet of propaganda as well as scheduled "educational" classes, the children were taught to view all Jews as evil. During routine camp and chapter meetings, older leaders taught the younger members that Jews were subhuman, reinforcing their indoctrination with Julius Streicher's semi-pornographic newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, which depicted ugly Jews with curly hair, always on the lookout for virginal-looking blond German women to seduce. Kater notes, "Those in the younger generation were steeped in this attitude and were socialized as little anti-Semites, who were not so little any more when they were called to fight in the war at age seventeen or less in 1944."

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Anti-Semitism was also part of the education of girls in the League of German Girls (the "Bund Deutscher Madel"), the female side of the Hitler Youth. They were taught to believe that their responsibility required them to protect the eugenic purity of German virgins from the predatory designs of Jews. *Der Stürmer* was used to illustrate images of lustful Jewish doctors taking "advantage" of their young German female patients. One insidious issue of Streicher's paper depicts a German female in her Jewish doctor's office, and the caption reads, "... and then the door opens. The Jew appears.... Terrified,... she jumps up. Her eyes stare into the face of the Jewish doctor. And that face is the face of the Devil. In the middle of that Devil's face there sits a huge hooked nose. Behind the glasses glisten the eyes of a criminal.... 'Finally I've got you, little German girl.'"

When war broke out in September 1939, former Hitler Youth aged eighteen or older found themselves members of the Wehrmacht. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, many former members of the Hitler Youth were recruited by the SS and subsequently found themselves participating with enthusiasm in the mass killing of Jews. They were armed not only with weapons of war but also

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with ideological conviction. They carried into battle the belief that they were the master race and that Jews had no right to life. Kater cites the remarks of one former member of the Hitler Youth on the Russian front who wrote, "As one watches these people, one gets the impression that they really have no justification whatsoever to exist on God's earth."

The twenty teenagers who met with Hitler in his bunker towards the end of the war were a product of a system that taught unquestioned obedience. To meet Hitler in person was the fulfillment of a dream harbored by nearly all Hitler Youth boys and girls. This love and idolization of Hitler explains why some of these teenage soldiers engaged in suicide missions that veteran Wehrmacht soldiers would never have dared to attempt, such as allowing tanks to roll over them and detonating a grenade. In the nearly endless tally of Hitler's crimes, this destruction of a generation of German children must also find its place. ♦

An American Abroad

Agnes Smedley and the world of communism.

BY HARVEY KLEHR

Agnes Smedley is not much remembered today. During the late 1940s she was the *bête noire* of the China Lobby for her labors on behalf of Chinese communism, but her name did not pop up in the decrypted Venona cables, so she has not been among those branded as spies in the past decade. Her fictionalized autobiography, *Daughter of Earth*, published in the mid-1920s, did enjoy a brief vogue in the early days of the Women's Studies movement, but apart from a single biography published in 1987, she has slipped into obscurity.

But now Ruth Price's *The Lives of Agnes Smedley*—a biography based on astonishingly thorough research in newly available Chinese, Russian, British, and American archives—demonstrates just how wide a swath Smedley cut through the radical movements of several continents and how deeply she was enmeshed in Soviet espionage activities.

Price succeeds in bringing to life an irritable, self-contradictory radical who managed to annoy and infuriate almost everyone with whom she worked. A product of a gritty working-class family, she retained for her entire life a steely contempt for middle-class radicals. A militant feminist, she endured years of abuse from her lover. An unrepentant individualist, she tried unsuccessfully to join several Communist parties. An eager recruit for the Soviet intelligence services, she blithely ignored their orders.

Still, despite her doctrinal differences with Communists, she hated their enemies even more to the end of her life. Born into a poverty-stricken Missouri family in 1892, Agnes Smedley first became involved in radical politics in California prior to World War I, supporting the Indian independence movement by aiding a revolutionary Sikh political party.

After a move to New York, she became an activist in Margaret Sanger's birth-control movement. Later, she was indicted by the federal government for violating the Espionage Act in 1918 because of her anticolonial activities. She lived in Germany in the 1920s, served as a journalist in China in the 1930s while aiding the Sorge spy ring, and lived in Yenan with the Chinese Communists and traveled with their troops. In the late 1940s the United States Army accused her of being a spy. She died in 1950 while under investigation by several branches of the American government.

Price, "a self-identified leftist," began her project convinced that Smedley was an independent rebel but confesses that her research proved "unsettling." Not only did Smedley work as a Soviet agent, she also consciously worked with German agents during World War I while helping Indian revolutionaries. A "master of deception," she used friends and colleagues to "shield her clandestine activities," lying to them with few compunctions. But Price nonetheless sees her as someone who "acted from a truly generous heart," was fiercely committed to the downtrodden, capable of enormous self-sacrifice, independent, and completely irreverent.

Smedley altered elements of her childhood in *Daughter of Earth* to make herself appear even more "proletarian" than she was. The autobiography, for instance, turned her father into a coal-miner active in the strikes that ravaged the Trinidad, Colorado, mines in the early 1900s, when he actually worked as a vigilante for the coal companies.

Still, Smedley did endure a lot. Her mother beat her, her father was a drunk, and her aunt a prostitute. Converted to socialism by her first husband, Agnes soon left him for full-time involvement with the Hindustan Ghadr party, whose California branch raised funds and recruits for a violent rebellion in India. Smedley worked as

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a courier, laundering money provided by the German government to buy arms. After moving to New York in 1917, she had a sexual encounter with M.N. Roy, a charismatic Indian revolutionary and early Communist activist.

Smedley moved to Europe after the government eventually dismissed her indictment for espionage and began a decade-long relationship with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, a fierce rival of Roy's for the leadership of the radical, anti-Gandhi wing of the Indian independence movement. She first visited Moscow with him in 1921 to attend a Comintern congress, befriended Emma Goldman and, instinctively sympathetic to anarchists and syndicalists, kept her distance from the more disciplined Communists. Settling in Berlin, she and Chattopadhyaya established a center for Indian exiles and radicals that competed with Roy's explicitly Communist group. By the mid-1920s, they were secretly receiving money from Willi Muenzenberg, the Comintern's ace propagandist and leading exponent of building ties to non-Communists.

All pictures: Oxford University Press.

Mao Zedong, Chu Teh, and Agnes Smedley in 1937.

Despite her fictionalized portrayal of her ties to Chattopadhyaya, a high-caste Brahmin, as a feminist love story in *Daughter of Earth*, their relationship was deeply troubled. He refused to marry her, his family scorned her, and he abused her physically and psychologically. After painfully extricating herself from his clutches (Chattopadhyaya eventually disappeared into the Gulag), Smedley moved to China at the behest of the Comintern, which needed someone with an American passport to work there. Beginning in 1928 she operated a courier service, distributed propaganda, and served as a clandestine communications link with Moscow. Her public independence from the Comintern made her an ideal agent in a country where Chiang Kai-shek had only recently shattered his alliance with the Chinese Communist party, brutally attacking and slaughtering thousands of party members.

In late 1929 Smedley was the only Western journalist in China receiving information from the Chinese Communist party. That winter, Victor Sorge, a German-born agent of Soviet military intelligence, contacted her for assistance in setting up his espionage network. She worked with him for three years, becoming not only his "chief recruiting agent" but also his lover. While posing as a journalist with fierce attachments to the Chinese Communists, she manipulated other Westerners, including the young John King Fairbank, whom she used as a letter drop.

The Lives of Agnes Smedley
by Ruth Price
Oxford University Press, 498 pp., $35

Smedley briefly returned to the United States in 1934 and worked with Communist party leader Earl Browder to set up a new, English-language, ostensibly independent newspaper in China. Shortly after her return to China, however, she defied Comintern orders, meeting directly with Chinese Communist activists. Concluding that she was too much a lone wolf and too undisciplined, Browder demanded that she come back to America. She tartly refused, reminding him that she was not a party member.

The American Communists soon dispatched two functionaries to oversee her work; they quickly discovered that Smedley had spent money earmarked for the newspaper on other projects (and lost more on currency speculation in a desperate effort to recoup the principal) and that she was more interested in attacking Chiang Kai-shek than the Japanese, despite the Comintern's new Popular Front policy. The Comintern sent an order that its agents should avoid her because she was "so temperamental and unstable."

As if they needed additional evidence, Smedley supplied it in 1936. By happenstance she was in Sian when Chang Hsueh-liang, a Manchurian warlord known as "the Young Marshall," arrested Chiang and demanded that he agree to a coalition with the Communists to fight against Japan. The Soviet Union called for Chiang's release, but, in a radio broadcast, Agnes denounced Moscow. While disciplined Communists shuddered at her indiscretions, Smedley continued to

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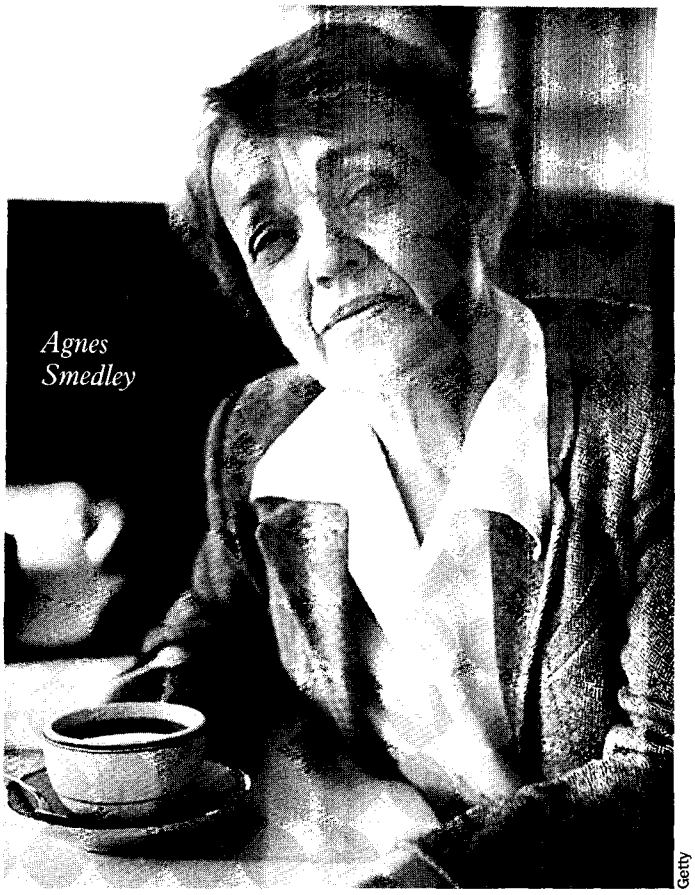

Agnes Smedley

Getty

propagandize on behalf of revolutionary forces and causes.

Just days after the American party formally denounced her for her indiscretions in Xi'an, Smedley arrived in Yenan, the Chinese Communists' stronghold, to be told by the Chinese Communists that she would not be allowed to write a book on their Long March. Undismayed, she settled in a cave, befriended party leaders such as Chu Teh, organized evening square dances and fox trots, and became Mao Zedong's confidante. The party leader stopped by every night on his way to work to discuss, among other topics, sexual liberation.

While Agnes thoroughly enjoyed herself, the wives of party leaders grew increasingly testy, convinced that she was corrupting their husbands. When Mao's wife caught him romancing a Chinese actress living next to Smedley, she began pounding him with a flashlight; Agnes decked her. In the aftermath of the scandal, Mao asked the Politburo to allow him to divorce, and Smedley was ordered to leave Yenan, having been turned down for membership in the Chinese Communist party on the grounds that she was too individualistic.

Smedley traveled with the Chinese Red Army for several years before returning to the United States in May 1941. Although her opposition to the Nazi-Soviet Pact exacerbated her conflicts with the American Communists, by 1944 she was back in the party's good graces as the wartime coalition between Chiang and the Communists began to fray.

When news of the Japanese destruction of the Sorge ring slowly made its way into the Western press, American security forces began to show a renewed interest in her past. General Charles Willoughby, General MacArthur's intelligence chief, wrote a classified report on the Sorge ring that linked her to its activities. Leaks about the report at first led the Pentagon to apologize to her. But when the report was made public in February 1949 as the Chinese Communists moved closer to victory and the United States became increasingly fixated on the issue of Soviet espionage in light of the revelations of Whittaker Chambers and Elizabeth Bentley, Smedley faced increasing pressure.

The truth—that she had worked with a Soviet espionage ring but that it was directed against Japan and Kuomintang forces and that she had been dropped from the work because she was unreliable—was not an attractive option. After some difficulty she obtained a passport and left for Britain; she died during surgery for ulcers in May 1950, leaving a denunciation of the "fascist" American government. Her ashes were interred in Communist China, and in her will she left much of her estate to Chu Teh.

Price's conclusion that Smedley fought "many of the right battles; for herself, for us, and for history" may be disputed. But her account of how a poorly educated woman from a dysfunctional Midwestern family became a figure in the public and clandestine drama of twentieth century radical politics is a fascinating story. ♦

Boxing in Jazz

Wynton Marsalis imposes his version of the story of Jazz on a Ken Burns documentary. **BY TIM MARCHMAN**

Wynton Marsalis, always mindful of the relation between his own music and the jazz tradition, spends a great deal of effort promulgating his views of what qualifies for the jazz canon. This often civic-minded work has helped assure him a place in jazz history. But on the downside, his music, alternately excellent and frustrating, often seems a mere appendage to his public role as Keeper of the Jazz Flame.

Tim Marchman writes for the New York Sun *and is an editor at* NewPartisan.com.

Listening to Marsalis's soundtrack to Ken Burns's documentary *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (which debuted on PBS this month), one hears yet more self-conscious political statement. The music has less to do with Jack Johnson, whose rise as a boxer happened to coincide with the rise of jazz, than the musical tradition Marsalis believes to have been brutally, irretrievably corrupted in the 1960s.

This is a shame. As music, Marsalis's soundtrack is intriguing; as a reaction to the legacies of Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and Miles

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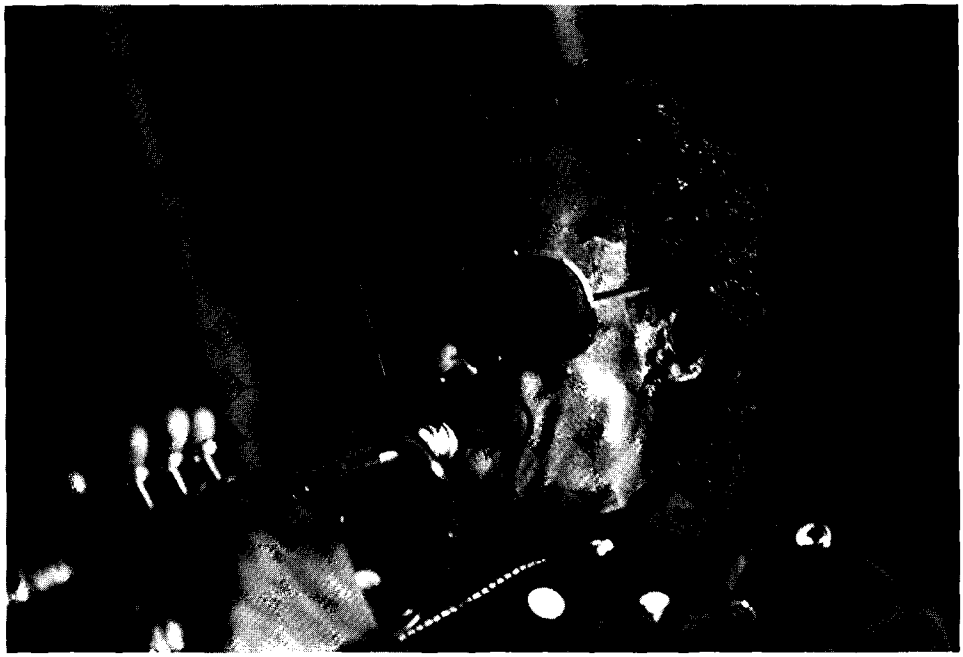
Davis, the soundtrack is at best confused, at worst bizarre.

Marsalis's frustration with Miles Davis, who also found inspiration in the life of Jack Johnson, has perhaps the most bearing on this soundtrack. In Marsalis's curatorial work and his many public statements—such as those in *Jazz*, a Burns documentary that gave great attention to Marsalis and his views—he has reserved a special role for Davis as the villain of modern jazz. The great trumpeter's hideous 1970s decline, ending in devotion to a cramped electric jazz/rock hybrid, was not, according to Marsalis, the mere consequence of poor taste, vanity, and drug use. It was a complete betrayal, best understood as a deliberate choice to forgo the bright world of ritual and tradition, of Sidney Bechet and Lester Young and Art Tatum, in favor of indiscipline, popular appeal, and youth worship—the very dark forces that, according to Marsalis, would destroy jazz in the 1970s.



Landov

Above: Miles Davis. Below: Don Byron.

But the 1970s actually proved an extraordinarily fecund time for jazz. Titans like Ellington, Charles Mingus, and Earl Hines recorded their last great albums, while a generation of young veteran players like Toshiko Akiyoshi, Steve Lacy, and Mal Waldron matured and redefined everything from what a big band sounds like to the way Thelonious Monk compositions should be played. The notion of the 1970s as a time of cocaine-fueled free-jazzers sporting white-man's afros and electric bassoons isn't wholly inaccurate. But in the same spirit one could write off the 1930s as a time of graceless all-white big bands, the 1940s as a time of generic beboppers in porkpie hats, and the 1950s as a time of heroin-addled Left Coasters playing affectless cool jazz. To write off any time as the sum of its excesses is to make a mockery of what is valuable in each.

Another high point of the decade—and this is inconvenient for anyone who believes that Davis died as an artist when he discovered the electric guitar—is Davis's own 1971 *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*. Even those confirmed in their distaste for his post-1960s output regard this as his last great record. Paranoid, violent, and monolithic, it essentially consists of two half-hour slabs of repetitive, stripped-down funk rhythm, electric guitar, and Davis's most discursive trumpeting. This was the one time Davis's vision of a true fusion of rock and jazz was realized, and it is a towering and monstrous achievement, recasting Johnson as an icon for the age of black power. Despite its blaring relevance to the Ken Burns documentary, Marsalis completely shuns *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* on his soundtrack, even as he references several farflung moments in jazz history that have nothing to do with Jack Johnson or his era.

Unforgivable Blackness is a weird kind of pastiche. The main style isn't that of Johnson's heyday, the first decade of the 20th century, but that of the 1920s. Closer listening reveals also an odd fascination with late-1950s Duke Ellington. Numbers like "Ghost in the House" have horn arrangements straight out of the *Far East Suite* or *Anatomy of a Murder*. "Deep Creek" sounds for all the world like a contemporary ensemble masquerading as one of Louis Armstrong's 1920s small groups with Ellington sideman Johnny Hodges sitting in on saxophone. On another tune with an old-

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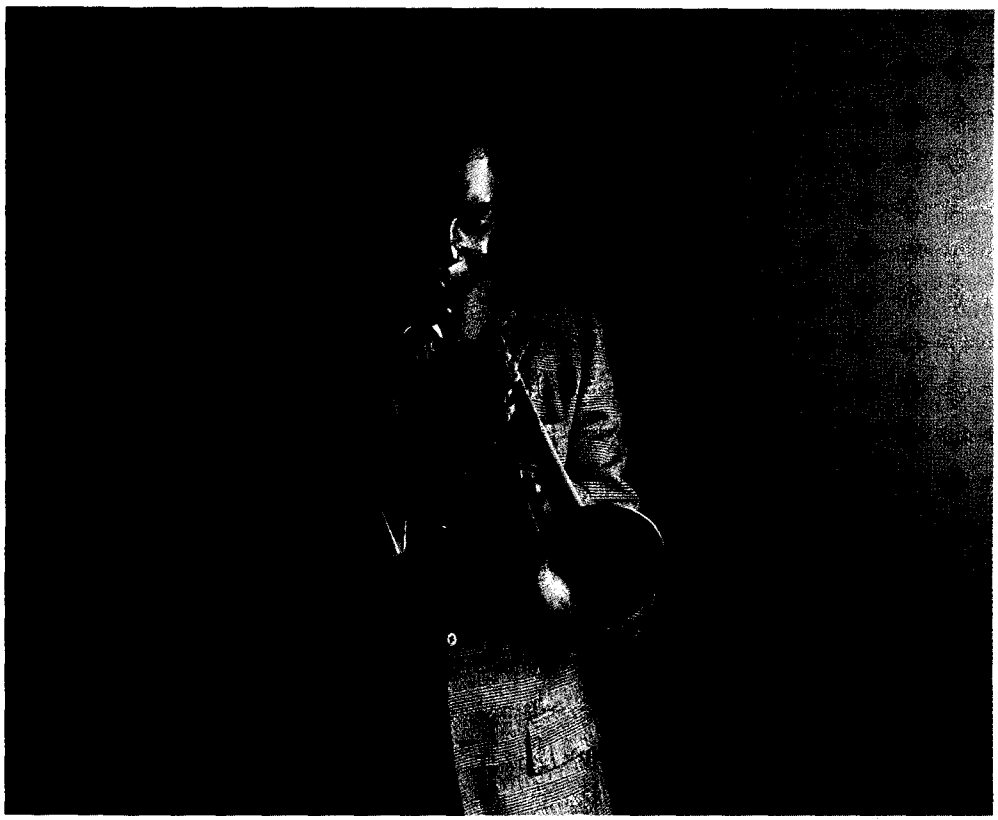
timey setting, "Fire in the Night," Marsalis oddly channels early-1960s Davis on the trumpet.

The effect of all this anachronism is queer and unsettling, especially when one considers that most listeners, who have never heard of Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers or the Dixie Syncopators, will take this for a more or less faithful recreation of the music of Johnson's times.



Landov

Wynton Marsalis

What makes Marsalis's soundtrack even more idiosyncratic is the soft, rounded tones he imparts to 1920s jazz, which in fact was not gentle music at all. It was harsh, violent, and raucous. And it sounded like what it was—music played largely, though by no means exclusively, for thieves, pimps, and gamblers. There is nothing of this in Marsalis's safe and reassuring vision. Whatever its technical proficiency, *Unforgivable Blackness* is inwardly directed music about Marsalis's idyll of a world where a 60-year-old Duke Ellington does horn arrangements for a teenaged Louis Armstrong and his group to play in front of tuxedoed gentlemen. However many plunger mutes, steel guitars, piano rags, and other old-timey touches it may involve, Marsalis's is a vision of a closed circle in which jazz past feeds on jazz past, with nothing to say to the present. It evokes and longs for a past that never existed. In a word, it is nostalgist.

To hear the continuing relevance of the jazz tradition, one is better off turning to players every bit as obsessed with the past, but less fixated on stylistic conceits. Take Don Byron. A virtuoso of the clarinet, Byron has sometimes been tagged as a mere experimentalist, too interested in such esoterica as klezmer music or jazz-hip hop fusion to give full rein to his talents. His newest trio recording, *Ivey-Divey*, should put such complaints to rest. It is everything *Unforgivable Blackness* is not. Witty, spontaneous, and vibrant, it offers flexibility in place of rigidity, adventurousness in place of obedience, and group dynamics in place of one man's peculiar vision.

The conceit of the album should give a hint of Byron's ambition. Its first third is given over to a reinterpretation of a 1946 Lester Young trio session, including such warhorses as "I Cover The Waterfront" and "I Want To Be Happy." The rest is a mixture of Byron's own compositions and some Miles Davis numbers, including one from his famous *Kind of Blue* and another from Davis's first electric album, *In A Silent Way*.

Unforgivable Blackness
The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson
by Wynton Marsalis
Blue Note Records, $18.98

Ivey-Divey
by Don Byron
Blue Note Records, $17.98

Despite these eclectic sources, the record sounds always and completely like Byron. Immensely fluent in all ranges of his horn, with a subtle appreciation of the contrasts and the interplay possible within a trio, Byron evokes hornmen from the pioneering Johnny Dodds to free-jazz maestro Eric Dolphy, without ever merely ventriloquizing. Styles and compositions are not superimposed on one another, or knowingly flashed, but kept at hand. Byron draws on a wider array of resources than Marsalis, and he puts them to better ends. This is a record meant to express moods and feelings, not an ideological attack on the supposed end of jazz.

It's a good thing to have a man of Marsalis's talents out there, railing on behalf of Young and Dodds and Count Basie and everyone else who may have been forgotten by an easily distracted world.

But there are subtler ends to which these men's legacies can be put than advertising the fact that they have legacies. It's the experimentalist Byron, no more talented or resourceful than Marsalis but significantly less stern, who proves himself their true heir. That fits. If there's one thing with which jazz has nothing in common, it's dogmatism. ♦

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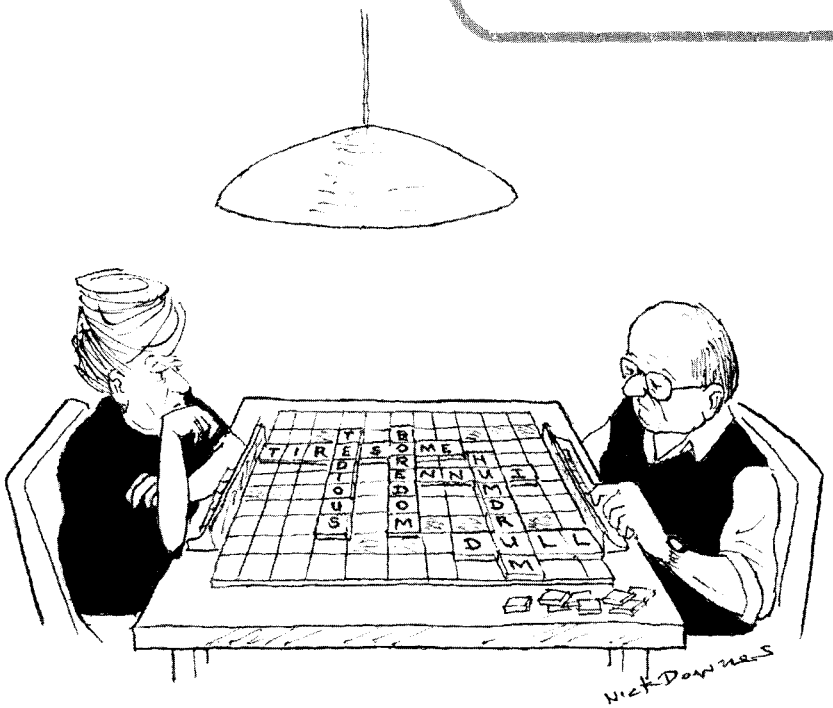
The Standard Reader



Books in Brief

***The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History* by Thomas E. Woods Jr. (Regnery, 280 pp., $19.95).** It is not surprising that a history guide written by a professor with an undergraduate degree from Harvard and a doctorate from Columbia made it onto the *New York Times* bestseller list. What is surprising—refreshingly so—is that a text that challenges the liberal canon has so resonated with the American public.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History provides a compelling rebuttal to the liberal sentiment encrusted upon current history texts. Covering American history from 1629 to 2002 in eighteen concise chapters, Woods's book offers an immediately accessible response to false assertions about the history of America. In less than a minute one can find and demonstrate, for example, that it was not an obstructionist minority that caused the United States Senate not to ratify the League of Nations Treaty in 1920. In short, when your history teacher, or your dinner guest, or your debate opponent propounds the usual drivel, you can whip out the book and say, "Hold on. What about this?" Highlighted inserts throughout the text enhance this access, including references to "Books You Are Not Supposed to Read," and pertinent quotations from historical figures.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to American History is ultimately about truth. Chapter 12, for instance, is entitled: "Yes, Communist Sympathizers Really Existed." This is a book everyone interested in American history should have in his library.

—James W. Haley Jr.

***Salonica: City of Ghosts* by Mark Mazower (Knopf, 476 pp., $35).** Mark Mazower, a scholar of Greek and Balkan history who teaches at Columbia University, has produced a hefty volume that will stand as a major, if incomplete, popular history of one of the most remarkable urban communities ever to exist. That is the port on the Aegean, known to its original Macedonian and Greek inhabitants as Thessaloniki, to its later Jewish, Turkish, and Albanian residents as Selânik, to the peoples of its Slav hinterland as Solun, and to the rest of the world as Salonica.

The city was a prize sought by many a military adventurer over the millennia, but the most remarkable chapter in its epic doubtless began at the end of the fifteenth century, with decisions by the Ottoman sultans to rescue the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal. The Sephardic Jews were resettled throughout the Turkish empire, but Salonica became their center, remaining more than three-quarters Jewish until the first decades of the twentieth century.

With the Greek defeat of the Turks and the withdrawal of the Muslim power, the Sephardim were soon found to be a nuisance rather than an asset. A terrible fire destroyed most of the city's center in 1917, and in 1943 the Nazis transported the great majority of the remaining Jews to the flames of Auschwitz.

Ottoman Salonica was a special place in which religion, identity, and law were remarkably fluid. The Islamic mystics of the Sufi orders, the Christian worship of saints, and Jewish esoterism drew the people of Salonica together, rather than separating them, and many cases were known of those who stepped back and forth between the three faiths without much trouble.

Salonica is indeed a city of ghosts today, which is a pity, for its past offers much to study. Mazower has made a major contribution, with only a few minor errors and gaps—above all, he might have given more attention to the Jewish theological legacy of Salonica, which is considerable. But this is a book worth reading by anybody interested in the coexistence of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity—and interested in a single small but glorious place.

—Stephen Schwartz

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Lawmakers are debating different proposals for financing Social Security reform.
—News item

Making It Simple: Your Guide to Understanding Social Security Reform

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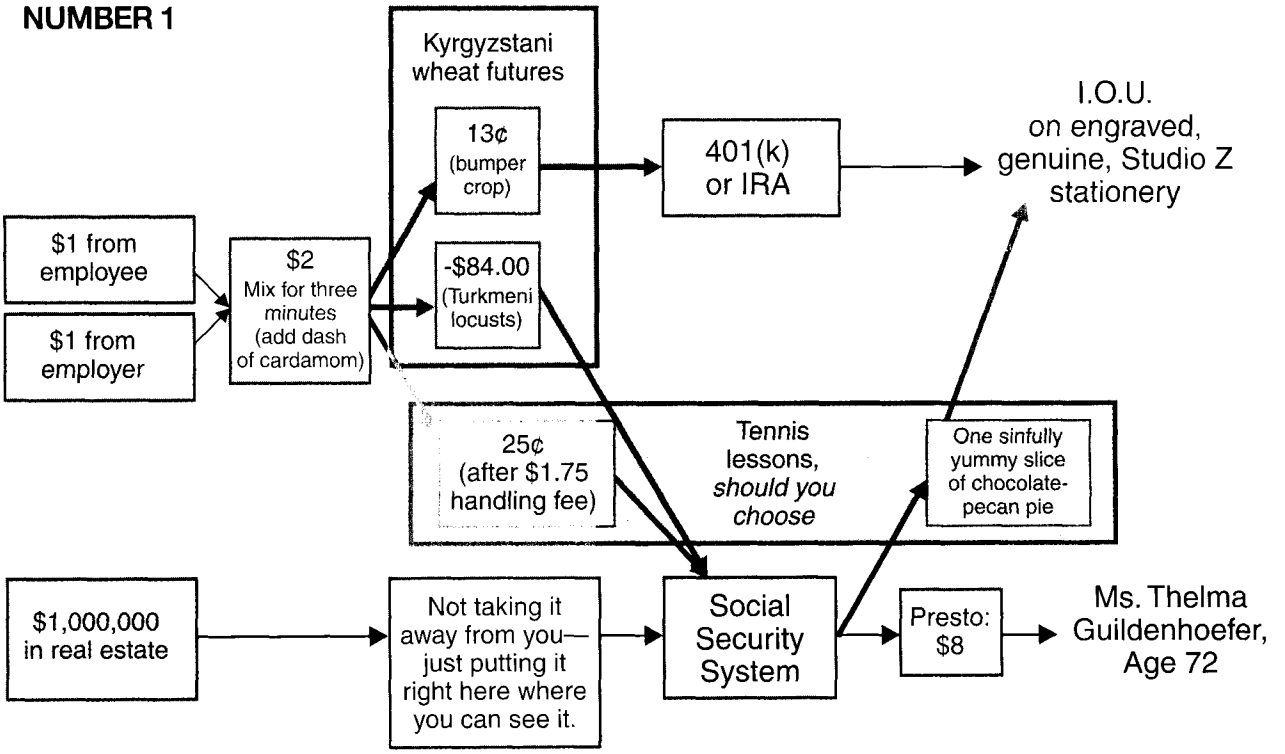

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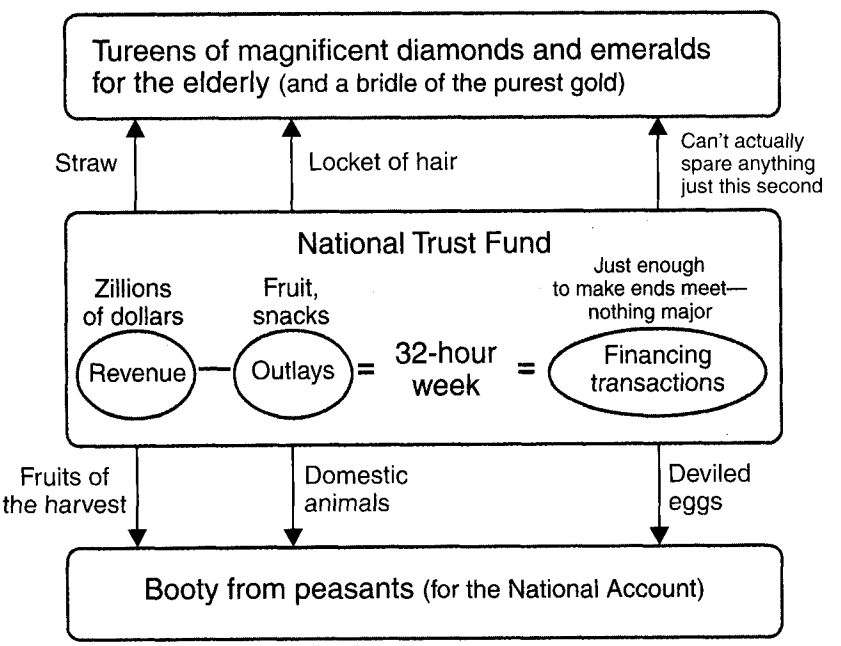

the weekly Standard
JANUARY 31, 2005

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Tsunami Lessons

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As the toll from the tsunami continues to mount, it has become clear that this catastrophe was also a political turning point. No governments may have fallen, but some deeply held political myths and beliefs have not been able to withstand the force of the tidal wave that changed the world.

First and foremost, **the myth of Islamic solidarity has been shattered.** Despite most victims in Indonesia, the most populous Islamic country on the face of the earth, being Muslim, the support flowing from Arab governments has been pitifully small. The decades of petrodollars and the years of high gas prices have apparently not put the oil-rich Middle East in a position to afford to offer much help to Muslims in distress. But as Islamic victims receive support from the non-Islamic world, the already dubious claim that the general opinion of Muslims in the Middle East might be predisposed to rise up against the West becomes simply untenable.

In the face of a real disaster, neither the fundamentalists nor the Baathists nor the anticolonialists have done much at all. In contrast, the energy of the Western relief effort is likely to put a deep dent in the anti-Western and especially anti-American propaganda of the Islamicists.

Second, the generosity of the developed world has been considerable, especially from such regional neighbors as Japan and Australia but also from the United States and Europe. The tendentious suggestion that the United States was "stingy" failed to note that the "old European" powers initially proposed relatively low offers of aid as well. Only as the real extent of the disaster became clear did these amounts grow to many times their original size. Moreover, the outpouring of support has highlighted the importance of private giving and therefore the role of society beyond the state, just as it has shed light on the marginal standing of the United Nations.

The UN may still be able to find a raison d'etre in aid coordination. Although, after the debacle of the Oil-for-Food program, to expect a small dose of efficiency from a UN operation requires a bold leap of faith. **The UN was simply unable to provide the leadership that came from the representatives of democratic nations—better unilateral action than multilateral inaction.**

Finally, because disaster relief is not only about cash but also about a logistic capacity to deliver aid to the needy, a strategic military presence is crucial. Good intentions are a wonderful thing to have, but troops on the ground get things done. Although the Europeans have promised generous amounts of aid, they simply lack the naval capacity to transport it to the region in a timely manner, and it is unlikely that they will develop such a capacity in the future. The United States played a central role in the relief effort, thanks to its fleet. It is difficult to imagine that this operation will not counteract some residual anti-Americanism in the area. French president Jacques Chirac complained that the United States stole the limelight from a hypothetical multilateral effort he might have preferred, but in the meantime American aid has been able to save lives in Indonesia because U.S. forces were actually able to get there.

—Russell A. Berman

Russell A. Berman is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Walter A. Haas Professor in the Humanities at Stanford University. He is the author of Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem *(2004).*

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